

## Progressive Squares

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We often hear that dancers and/or callers get bored, and I'm sure this is often true. Dancers are introduced to the square dance vocabulary so fast that they barely have the time to learn one basic movement before they are rushed onto the next. The net result is that the dancers learn to move only in a very limited set of choreographic patterns and it doesn't take very long before the caller has used up all the possibilities and boredom sets in. It doesn't have to be that way.

Some time ago, a caller sent me a batch of notes that was originally assembled by a choreographer named Will Orlich. I hadn't seen a copy of it in over 20 years. Will was a character. As far as I know he never called, but he had a very good mind for square dance choreography. The notes contained a description of a gimmick called progressive squares. I doubt that Will invented progressive squares, but he sure should get credit for documenting them. I have added considerably to Orlich's notes, made a series of diagrams and updated the terminology.

Progressive squares are one of many ways to add variety to a dance without having to teach something entirely new. It also presents the dancers with a challenge to see if they are willing to trust the caller. The general idea is to mix the dancers all over the floor and then return everyone back to their home square. To the dancer it looks like magic. For the caller it is a relatively simple memorized sequence.

**Editor's Note:** *Cal's original diagrams have been edited to add color to each of the two key squares to make them easier to track. Any errors in coloring are the Call Sheet Editor's fault, and not Cal's.*

### Rule 1: Setup

The first step is to set up the floor so the squares are arranged in rows and columns as shown at the bottom of this page.

Even though the nine squares are arranged in a box three wide and three deep, *the number of rows and columns makes no difference*. The setup could be three wide and four deep or four by four, two by two or even missing a square out of one corner.

### Rule 2: Dancer Rules

The second step is to set up some rules for the dancer.

**Dancer Rule 1:** *If you're facing another couple, even though that couple may be in another square, just do the call.* (At first, some dancers are just not going to believe this.)

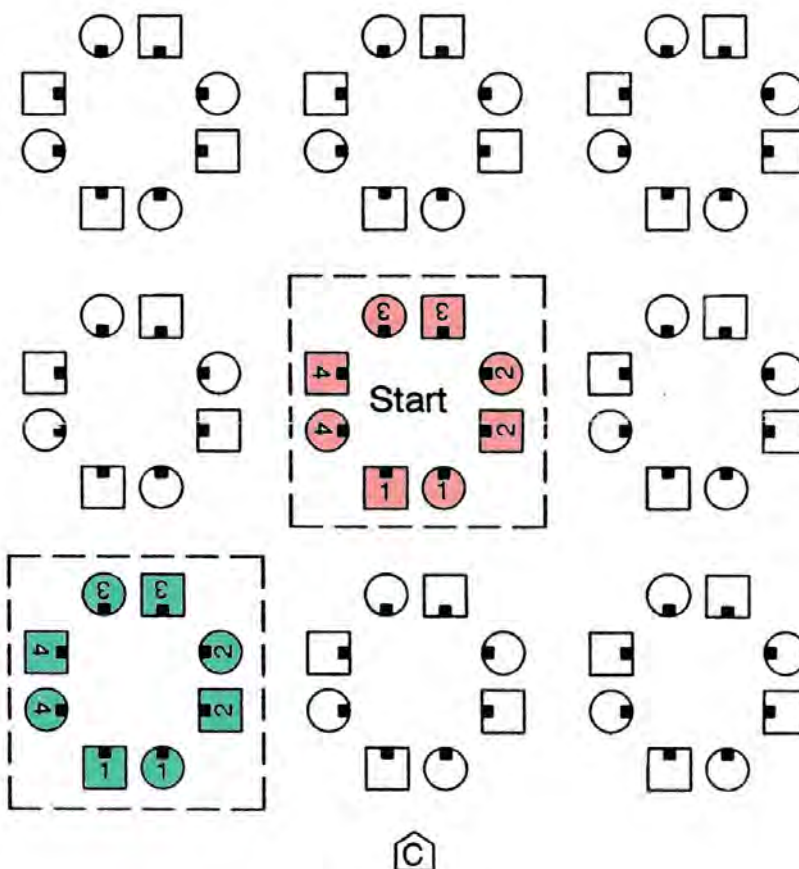
**Dancer Rule 2:** *If you're facing a wall or there's no other couple facing you, do a California Twirl or Wheel Around and wait.*

### Rule 3: Caller Rules

*A six-part sequence of calls must be followed and repeated twice.*

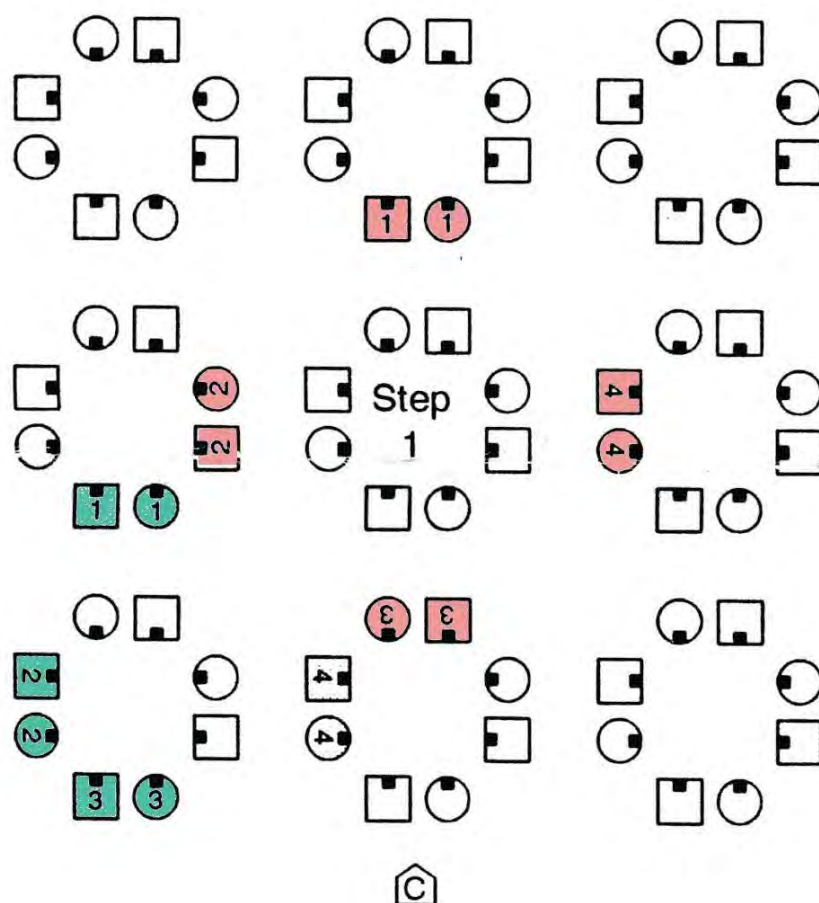
The diagrams follow the dancers in two squares through the six steps.

The two squares we'll follow are also shown in the diagram shown here.



**Step 1:** Move the head couples and the side couples to another square with *Pass Thrus* or equivalents.

**Two** *Pass Thru* movements will be needed for the head couples and two for the side couples. The first *Pass Thru* will put the couples either facing the wall or a couple in another square. The second *Pass Thru* will move everyone to a new square except the outside people. (Remember, they are supposed to *California Twirl* and wait.)

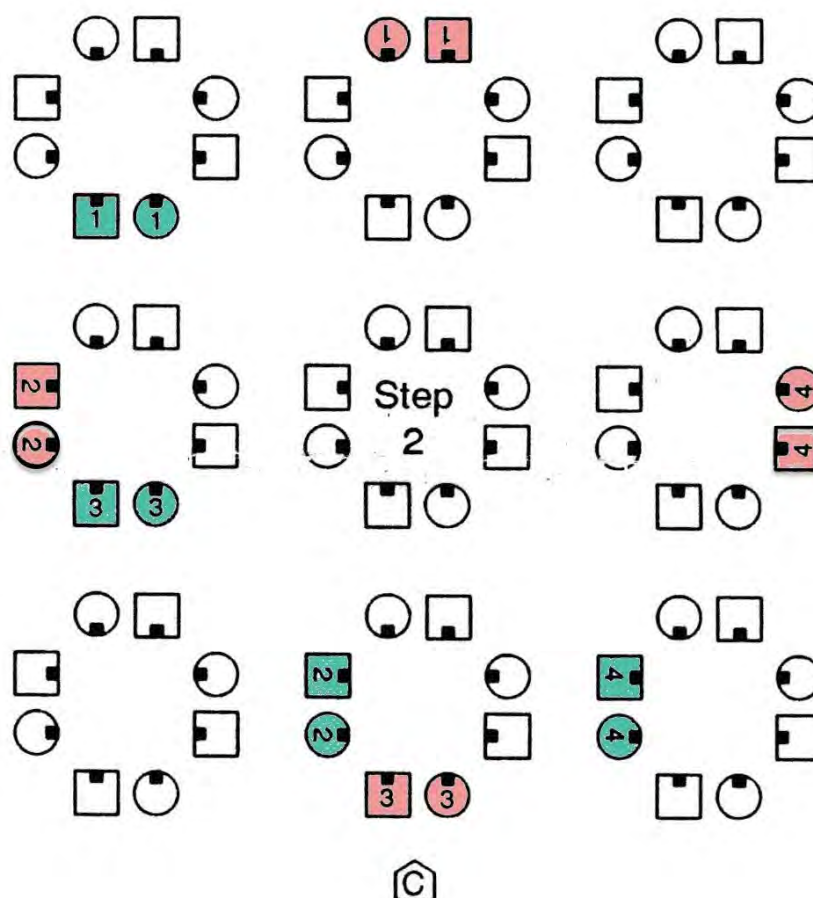


*Pass Thru* equivalents can be any combination that results in the same thing as a *Pass Thru*. An example would be to have facing couples do a *Right & Left Thru / Square Thru 3*.

Note: if the dancers are just not getting the idea, you can quickly return to the home squares with a *Right & Left Thru* for both the head couples and the side couples, then use two more *Pass Thrus* for the head couples and for the side couples. It might even be a good idea to do this one time just for practice.

**Step 2:** Move the head couples and the side couples to another square with *Pass Thrus* or equivalents.

At this point, all four couples have left their home square, but everyone should still have their partner. Recovery from this point is still easy.



Once again do a *Right & Left Thru* and then do *Pass Thrus* or the equivalent until everyone is back in their home squares. Here are several more *Pass Thru* equivalents for your consideration.

*Right & Left Thru* with a full turn.

*Square Thru Five Hands*

*Star Thru / Square Thru Four Hands*

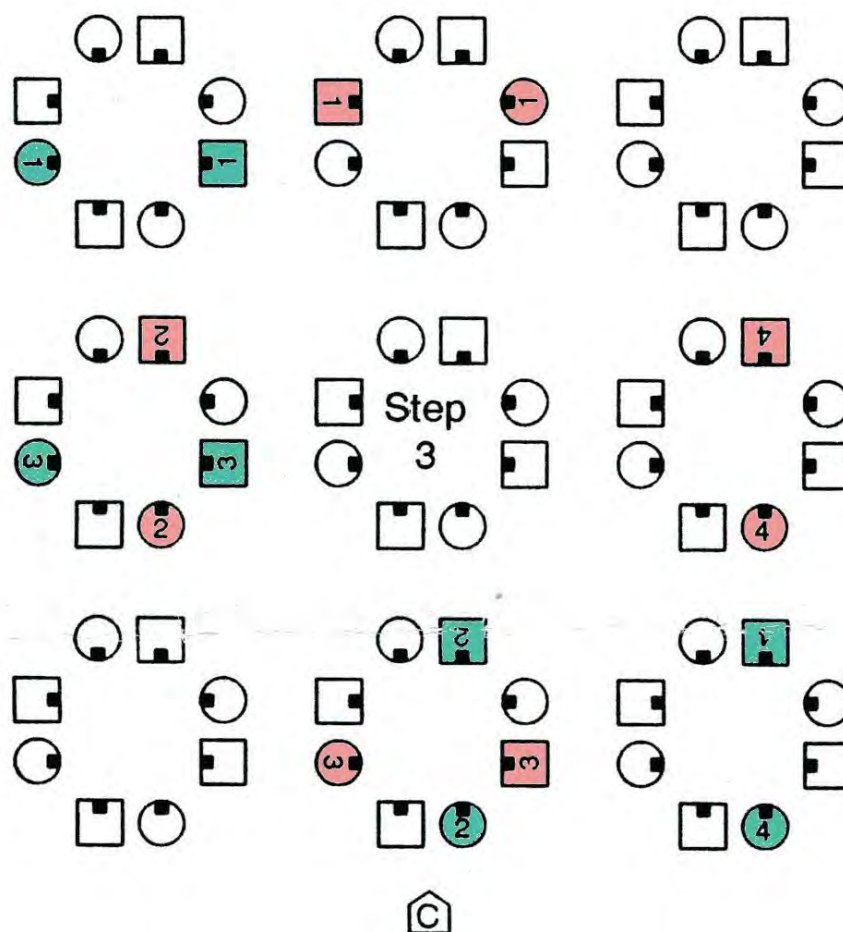
*Right & Left Thru / Roll Away with a Half-Sashay / Turn Thru*

*Swing Thru / Ladies Trade / Turn Thru*

### Step 3: *Call* Heads Square Thru 2 / Sides Dive Thru / Centers Star Thru.

*Pass to the Center* can be substituted for the *Dive Thru* and really flows better. The original directions had 4 *Ladies Chain Across* / *Heads face the Sides* / *Right & Left Thru*.

Most modern square dancers have never faced to the right as a couple to do a *Right & Left Thru*. Many of them will not know to face across the set following the courtesy turn.

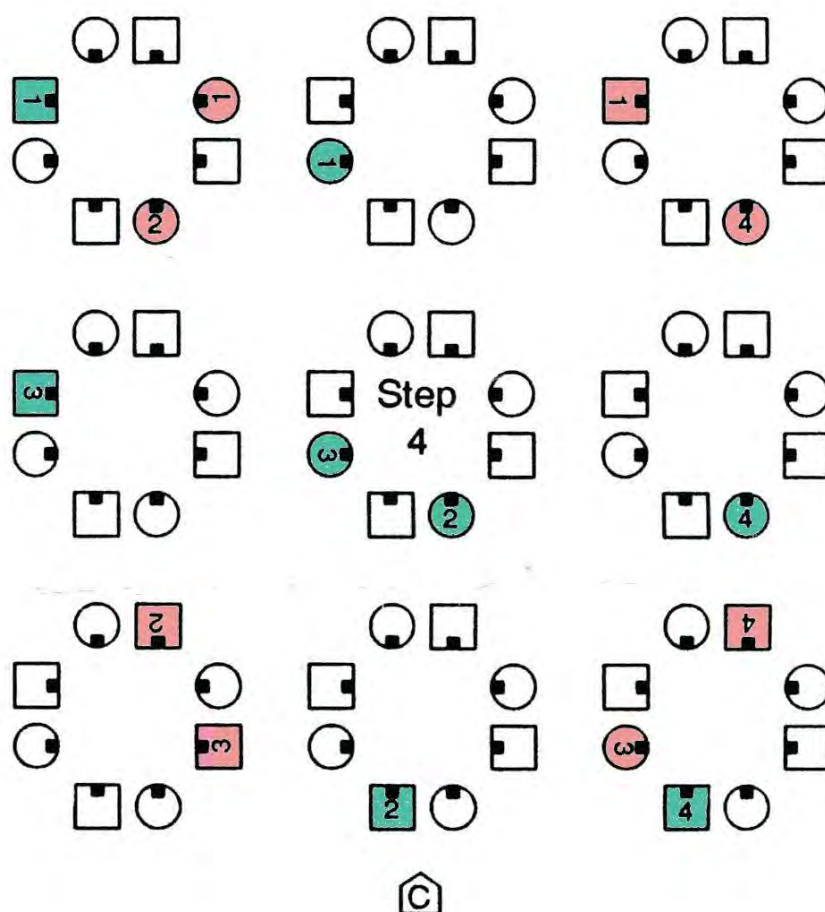


The goal of this step is to start people moving at right angles to the direction they were moving and to separate partners. Since this places everyone in new head and side positions I usually have the *Heads Go Forward & Back* and the *Sides Go Forward and Back* so I can visually be sure that *they* know their new roles.

The original partner is across the set at this point. Sometimes it is fun to tell the dancers to wave good-bye to the partner, they may never see them again!

**Step 4:** *Move the New head couples and the New side couples to another square with Pass Thrus or equivalents.*

The dancers must identify their new role as head couples or side couples because everyone has new positions.

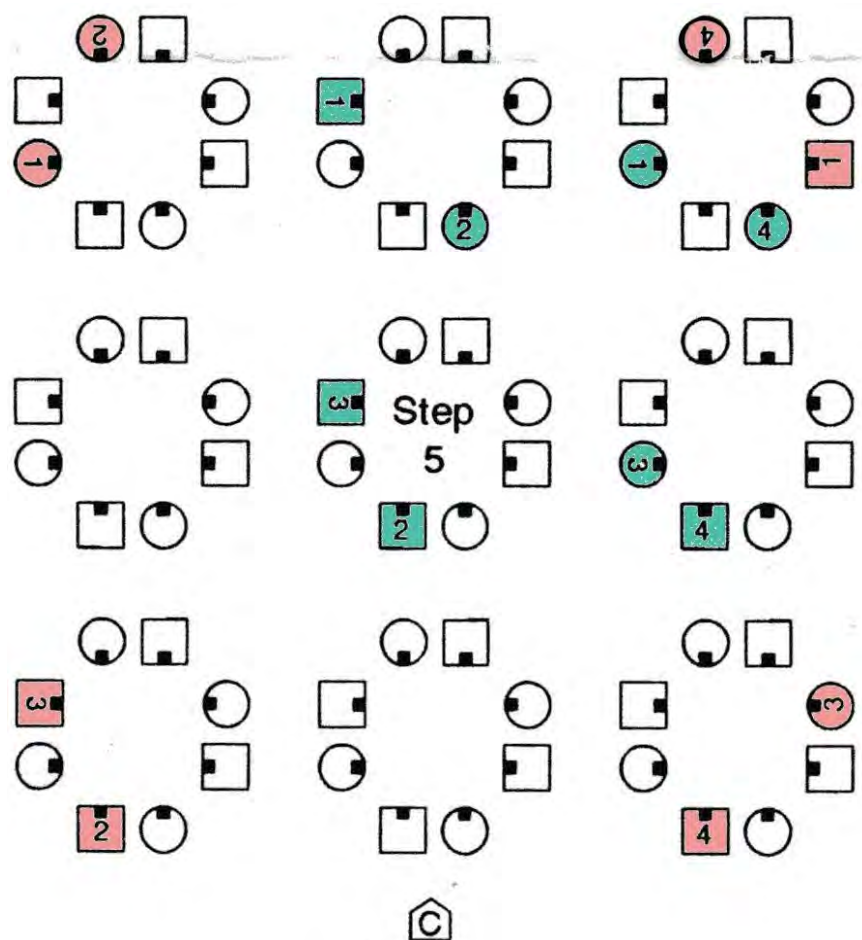


By this point, you should be noticing a pattern. Steps 4 & 5 are the same as Steps 1 & 2.

It may feel complex to the dancers, but the caller has a relatively easy job as long as you don't forget where you are in the sequence. You must keep reminding yourself that both the head couples and the side couples must be moved to new squares.

**Step 5:** *Move the New head couples and the New side couples to another square with Pass Thrus or Pass Thru equivalents.*

If you have a large hall and a good sized crowd, many of the dancers are a long way from where they started at this point.



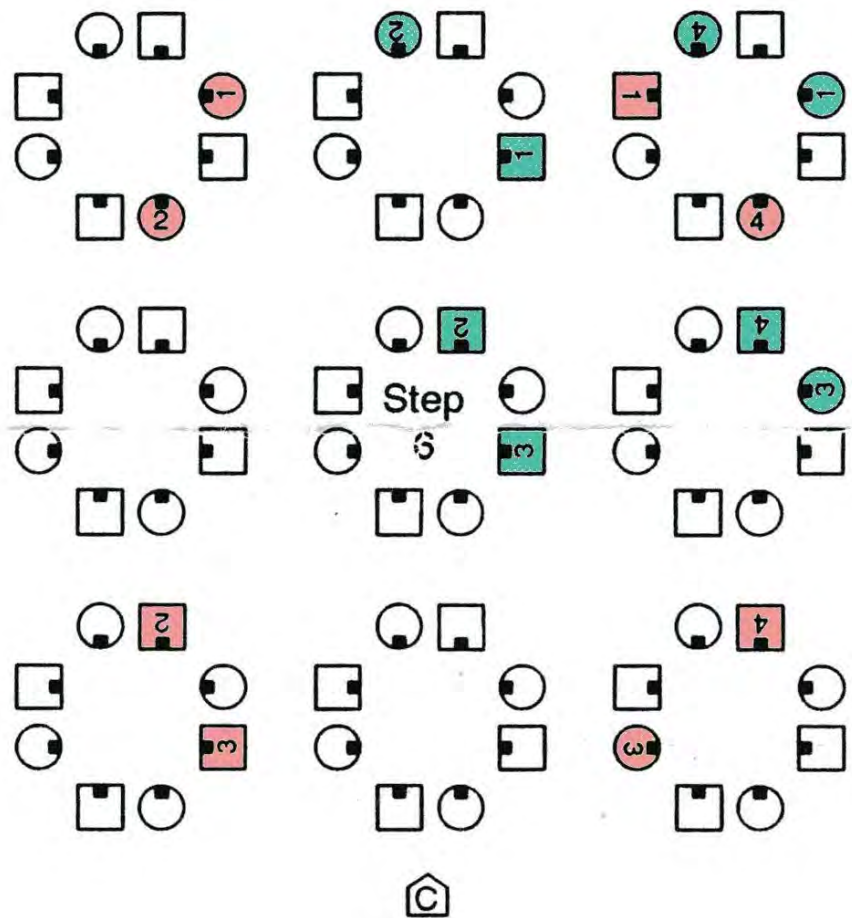
Most of them have doubts that they will ever see their partner again, much less return to their original position on the floor.

Depending on whether you stayed with the sequence or they believed you, they could be right.

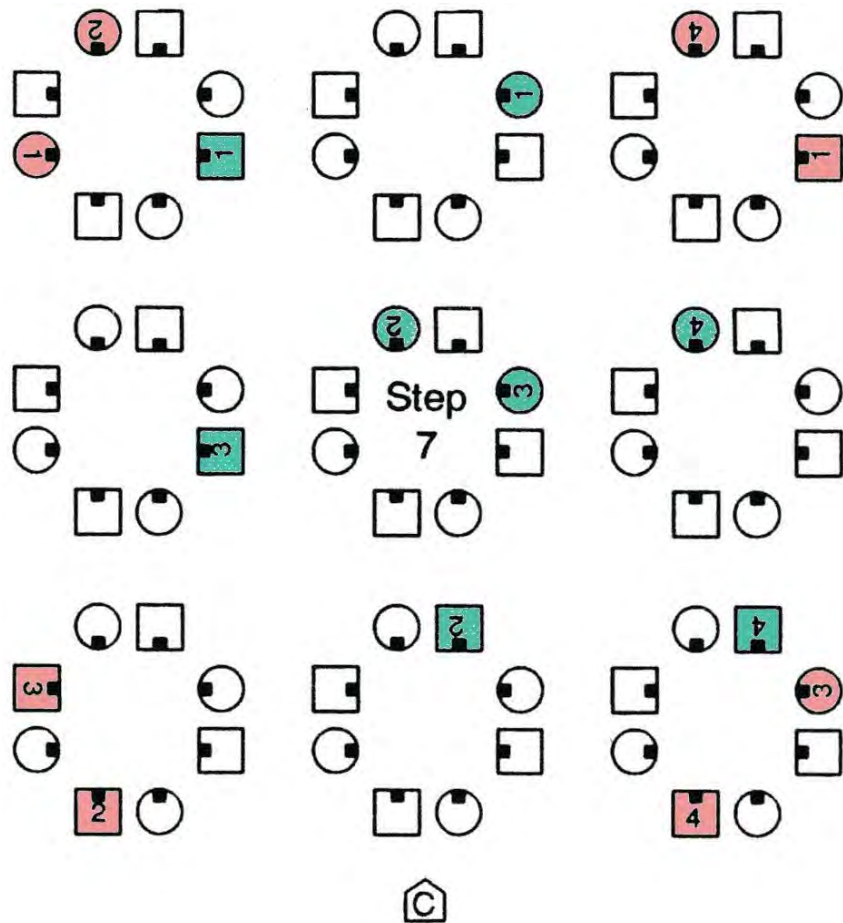
Chances are you will have enough good dancers to redeem your reputation.

### Step 6: *Call* Head Couples Right & Left Thru / Side Couples Right & Left Thru

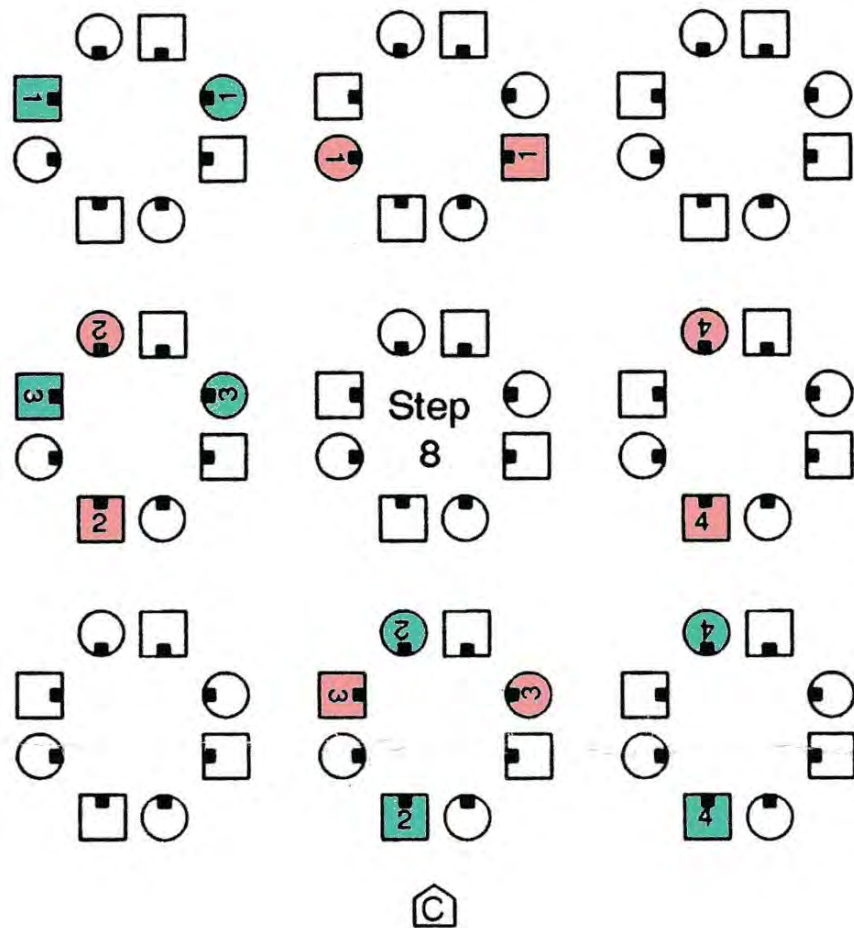
The halfway or tum around point is shown below. Now repeat the same sequence of moves six more times and everyone will be back to their original square.



**Step 7:** *Call Heads Pass Thru Twice / Sides Pass Thru Twice (or equivalents)*

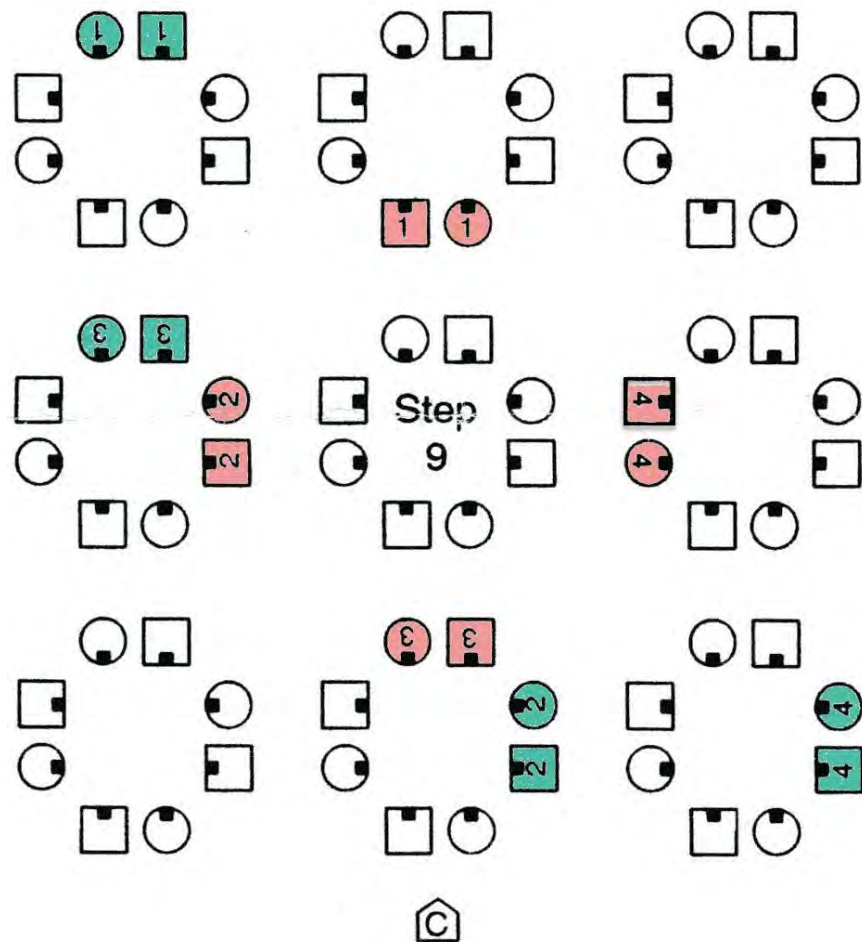


Step 8: *Call Heads Pass Thru Twice / Sides Pass Thru Twice (or equivalents)*

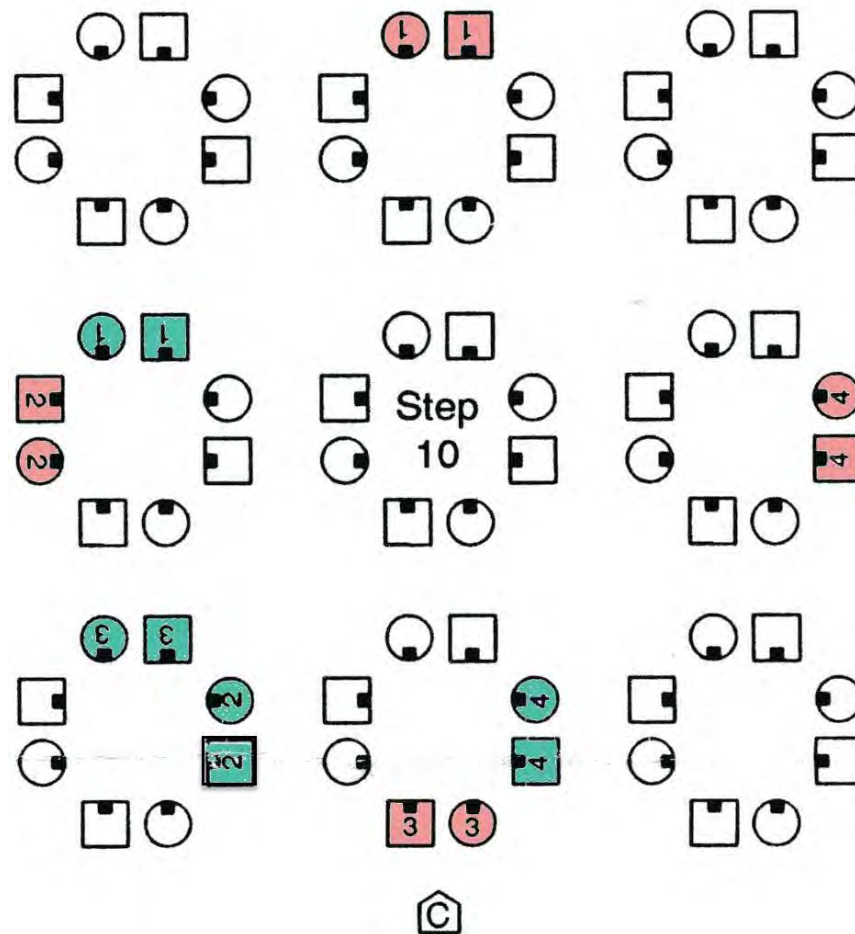


**Step 9:** *Call* Heads Square Thru 2 / Sides Dive Thru / New Centers Star Thru

Everyone now has their partner back. You might want to point that out. Everyone should also be back to their original heads and sides roles.

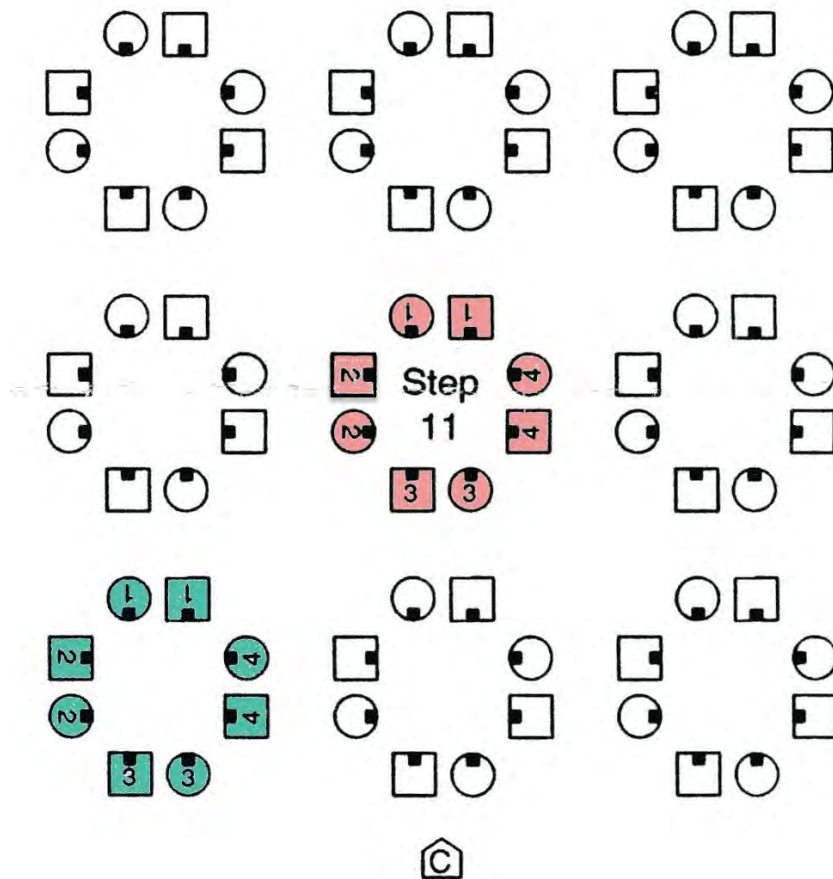


**Step 10:** *Call Heads Pass Thru Twice / Sides Pass Thru Twice (or equivalents)*



**Step 11:** *Call Heads Pass Thru Twice / Sides Pass Thru Twice (or equivalents)*

Everyone is back in their home square with their partner and in proper rotation. You can either call Step 6 with *Right & Left Thrus* for the head and side couples or get out to an Allemande Left. Your choice.



**The Entire Formula**

**Step 1:** *Heads pass thru twice (equivalents)*

**Step 2:** *Sides pass thru twice (equivalents)*

**Step 3:** *Heads Square Thru 2 / Sides Dive Thru / Centers Star Thru / (New heads forward and back) / (New sides forward and back)*

**Step 4:** *Heads pass thru twice (equivalents)*

**Step 5:** *Sides pass thru twice (equivalents)*

**Step 6:** *Head couples Right & Left Thru / Side couples Right & Left Thru*

Repeat above, then Allemande Left...

Enjoy!



### Editor's Note: Mike DeSisto's Progressive Squares

Many Call Sheet readers are familiar with Mike DeSisto's Progressive Squares, which work similarly, but not exactly, to Cal's description. Mike prefers to start by defining a "new" call of *Move On!* as "If you're facing someone, *Pass Thru*, if you're facing the wall, do a Partner Trade." Using "*Move On!*" sped up the action and kept dancers moving without Mike having to think about *Pass Thru* equivalents. Thus, "*Heads Pass Thru / Move On!*"

So here's one way that you might hear Mike call the formula at the end of Cal's article:

*Heads Pass Thru, Move On!*

*Sides Pass Thru, Move On!*

*Heads Square Thru 2*

*Sides Dive Thru and Star Thru*

*Heads Up to the Middle and Back!*

*Sides Up to the Middle and Back!*

*Heads Pass Thru, Move On!*

*Sides Pass Thru, Move On!*

*Heads do a Right & Left Thru*

*Sides do a Right & Left Thru*

Repeat above, then *Allemande Left...*

Mike's version of Progressive Squares also starts differently than Cal's, with Mike putting dancers into lines *before* invoking the double *Pass Thru* (called below as "*Pass Thru, Move On!*").

Below is a partial transcript of Mike DeSisto's Progressive Squares tip on April 9, 2009 at *DC Diamond Circulate*, the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual IAGSDC Convention held in Washington, DC.

The video can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp8hYLmilnw>

*Heads walk up to the middle and you come back out, Square Thru 4!*

*Slide Thru*

*Pass Thru / Move On!*

*Right & Left Thru*

*Pass Thru / Move On!*

*Star Thru*

*Left Alley-mande!*

*Come back and square your set.*

*Let's get a little bolder...*

*Heads walk up to the middle and you fall right out and then, Square Thru 4 in the middle*

*Slide Thru*

*Pass Thru / Move On!*

*Right & Left Thru*

*Square Thru 3 / Move On!*

*And a Right & Left Thru*

*Pass Thru, Move On!*

*Star Thru*

*Star Thru*

*Square Thru 3 / Move On!*

*Star Thru*

*Left Alley-mande!*



**Motivate & Invigorate**

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*Editor's Note: This is an adaptation of Harlan's presentation from CALLER-LAB 2019, in Richmond, VA.*

**Invigorating and Building a Home Club**

The following is a combination of things used at three clubs I work with, and distilled into a more generic approach. In brainstorming what the focus should be in having a successful class and developing/invigorating a club, I came up with 7 general areas that needed to be addressed:

1. How to effectively recruit new dancers
2. Class schedule: a class that covers Basic/SSD in a shorter period—12-14 weeks
3. Ensuring high rates of student success and that students graduate with a skill level that lets them dance successfully dance typical choreography found at most open dances
4. End endless class format—getting out of a constant learning mode (going Basic, Main-stream , Plus in a year). Providing recreational dancing on a regular basis after the first 14 week class.
5. Build in regular recreational dancing that engages all club members.
6. Build in a high level of social interaction
7. Ensure dancers have high levels of fun at all stages

The challenge? How to put these general objectives into a set of SMART goals.

**Quick Overview of SMART Goals**

In my consulting work with school districts that need change, I use a system called “SMART Goals”, where “SMART” is an acronym meaning:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound

**Specific:** What specific steps will you take to reach your goal? What accomplishments will help you know you've reached your goal?

**Measurable:** What will you use to measure progress towards your goal? How will you know when you have reached it?

**Attainable:** Is this goal realistic? With the information, resources and time that you have, can you obtain the goal of your action plan?

**Relevant:** How is this action plan aligned with, and relevant to the goal you need to accomplish?

**Time Bound:** By when will you complete this goal? Is this timeline realistic?

How can we apply these to recruiting, training, and retaining dancers?

**Sample Recruiting Objective:**

Look at the community and identify a few easy and direct ways to recruit people:

1. Weekly Farmer's Market
2. Weekly Summer Music in the Park series
3. Flash Mob
4. Monthly Community Dance nights with a focus on sociability and having fun dancing.
5. Articles in Local newspaper
6. Community Bulletin Boards
7. Contingent in local parades
8. Sign on hall
9. Someone to keep track of contacts

SMART Goal: Identify club members who will take charge of each of the items above.

***SMART Check: did this happen? How many were recruited as a result of each action?***

SMART Goal(s): Group of at least 4 dancers attend weekly farmer's market and...

- pass out flyers
- wear pins that say "I love square dancing—ask me why"
- Get names and emails of folks interested
- Position themselves near food and beverage stands where they can talk to folks standing in line

***SMART Check: did they do it? Every week?***

SMART Goal(s): Group of at least 4 dancers attend weekly summer music in the park, and:

- Pass out flyers
- Wear pins that say “I love square dancing—ask me why”
- Get names and emails of folks interested
- Position themselves near food and beverage stands where they can talk to folks standing in line
- Get names and emails of folks interested
- Position themselves near food and beverage stands where they can talk to folks standing in line

*SMART Check: Did this happen? How often?*

SMART Goal: Flash mob dancing: Organize a group of dancers who will do this. Have two dancers in charge of setting dates and schedule?

- At farmers market once a month
- Entrance to music in the park once a month, while people are coming and leaving.
- Local shopping center once a month
- Other venues???

*SMART Check: Did this happen? How often?*

SMART Goal: Monthly Community Dance nights at the Hall (see details below)

- Third Friday of every month hold a social night with a social time, community dance time, and club level dance times.
- Have club members designated to make positive greetings and interaction with each new person who comes
- Have a social event for the first hour (see below)
- First hour: intro to square dancing with emphasis on high energy and fun
- Get contact information on all folks
- Invite them to the next month and keep them apprised of when new class will start.
- Follow up with emails saying thanks for coming, we hope to see you at our community dance night next month on (date) and will keep you informed of our next class.

*SMART Check: Did this happen? How often?*

SMART Goal: Designate someone to contact and work on getting an article on the club in the local paper.

*SMART Check: Did this happen? Any results?*

SMART Goal: Find 1-3 folks to design flyers and post flyers and information on local bulletin boards.

Sample content to consider:

- Enjoyable, high energy class, with an emphasis on having fun, meeting new folks
- Singles and couples welcome—all ages—all couples combinations—everybody welcome
- If you are a couple: get out of the house and have fun together once a week
- If you are single come and meet a variety of new people
- Take two hours a week to get of line and interact with other face to face
- No funny clothes—casual wear
- 12 week course—first three weeks free—scholarships available for rest of course
- It's nothing like 8th grade gym class!
- Other ideas

*SMART Check: Did this happen? How many postings?*

SMART Goal: Parades: Designate someone to organize club members to be a contingent in local parades

- Get a sign-up list of at least two squares,
- Get two people to carry club banner
- Get four people to pass out flyers along parade route.
- Set up the caller in a classic car (e.g., 58 Chevy convertible) to call from

*SMART Check: Did this happen? Result summary?*

SMART Goal: Place a Welcome Sign on the Dance Hall:

- Someone to take charge of having a large banner made to put on the front of the hall: learn to Square Dance: call: xxx-xxx-xxxx (phone number) or go to (web address)

*SMART Check: Did this happen? Result summary?*

SMART Goal: Assign someone to keep a record of all contacts and to:

- Email them regularly about community dance nights
- Email them regularly about upcoming class start dates
- Remind them that scholarships are available
- Keep track of which mode of contact got them to come

*SMART Check: Did this happen? Result summary?*

### **Sample Building Objective: Train dancers faster.**

SMART GOAL: Design a Basic class to be one semester long as that is a format that many folks are used to for classes.

- Plan the class to cover most Basic calls and the SSD-50/Mainstream calls in 12-14 weeks
- Caller to design the format for this class.
- Class to start in September and end in December.
- Also plan a second semester, that would follow starting in January that would cover the remaining Mainstream calls and Plus (Note: in Northern California, most clubs teach Basic through Plus.)
- Give folks lots of social dance time while the class is going on to develop their skills—at least one class level dance a month

*SMART Check: Did this happen? How successful was it in student learning, student retention and student success?*

### **Sample Retention Objective: Aim for student success and retention.**

It's important to ensure high rates of student success and work towards students graduating with a skill level that lets them dance successfully dance typical choreography found at most open dances. In the past, some students have found it difficult to dance at open dances with success, and/or have sometimes become frustrated in class. A new class format and instructor will need to address this.

SMART GOAL: Ensure 90% student success on any given night and provide students with specific support mechanisms to assist with success.

- Dancers need to experience each call from all common positions they might run into at a dance
- Instruction needs to involve the shortest amount of time listening and not dancing and maximum amount of time dancing. Harlan plans to never just talk for more than 1 minute.
- Instruction needs to focus on dancer success—Harlan plans instruction for high levels of

success and high amounts of positive feed back to students. Success is related to thoroughness of instruction and planning for easy student comprehension. (see Harlan's paper on learning and square dance)

- Plan instruction with incremental difficulty so that students are successful at least 90% of the time at any given class session time in any given class night
- Have weekly review sessions for those students interested or students who missed a class. Schedule these for the 45 minutes before class. Have angels lined up to help.
- Dancers will dance each new call at least 25 times the first night of learning it and, at least 25 times the following night. Rationale: *to internalize a new motor action an adult needs to complete it successfully 48 times. To just become familiar with it, they need to complete it successfully 26 times.*
- Dancers will experience the calls for all common positions to avoid "Brain Groove" development (e.g.: dance swing thru with boys on end, girls on end, girls together, boys together)
- Dance cards: to ensure strong support, students are offered the option of dance card beginning in week three. A dance card pairs a new student with a different angel partner each tip, so the students know beforehand who they are dancing with. This is optional, and couples who wish to dance together are encouraged to do so, but many couples actually opted for dance cards in the classes. Need someone to take on the task of lining up angels and creating dance cards each week.

Example of a dance card:

Dance Card for September 28th		
<b>Student Name: Jane Doe</b>		
<b>Tip 1: Bob Doe</b>	<b>Tip 4: Jake Doe</b>	<b>Tip 7: Tom Doe</b>
<b>Tip 2: John Doe</b>	<b>Tip 5: Betty Doe</b>	<b>Tip 8: Open Tip</b>
<b>Tip 3: Mary Doe</b>	<b>Tip 6: Jim Doe</b>	

### An Aside on “Brain Groove”

There is a term for a learning element of square dancing, which I call *brain groove*. This is a personal construct of mine. By this, I mean that if dancers learn a call from one formation and dance it a repeated number of times from the same position in that formation *without experiencing variation*, they internalize the belief *that this is the only way to do the call*. As a result, their ability to generalize the definition to other formations, or to other positions than the formation is impaired because they have danced it from repeatedly without variation.

If the first 20 times you dance *Recycle*, it's from right hand waves with girls in the center and boys on the ends, dancers will internalize that as “how to do the call.” Should you then call it from right hand waves with girls on the ends, they will struggle with the call, even though they have danced it many times.

By initially calling a call repeatedly from the same set up, the caller is handicapping the dancers and limiting comprehension of how to execute the call and preventing them from being able to generalize their understanding of the call to a variety of positions. *This is a caller error, and is not a dancer learning disability.*

The brain groove concept is grounded in learning research which demonstrates *the need to know all aspects of a task in order to generalize to all possible situations*.

From my experience, it is important to vary positions from the beginning of a call to avoid development of “brain grooves”.

Let's re-examine teaching *Recycle*. If you're teaching it, you might start with boys on the ends (although there is no reason to do it this way), and in the first tip do it with boys on the ends, girls on the ends, girls together and boys together etc. I have done this for a few years now and find that varying positions can be done easily and is highly successful.<sup>6</sup>

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6 Editor's Note: The late John Sybalsky was well-known for building exceptionally strong dancers by teaching each call left-handed and sashayed before teaching it using standard applications.

**Sample Training Objective: End the “endless class” format.**

In the past, classes went on for a long time and then a new class started right away. Design a club format with more recreational dance time for everyone

SMART Goal: Have one recreational dance for all club dance programs each month. Ensure that class members have one dance a month to *just dance in a recreational/social format*.

- Plan this for the third Friday of each month. Here’s a sample of activities:
  - **September:** class starts
  - **October 3rd Friday:** Halloween Dance (optional come as a square dance call) First hour class level dancing, then other club programs
  - **November 3rd Friday:** Thanksgiving Dance Thanksgiving potluck with turkey and dressing provided, followed by dancing with first hour class level, then other club programs
  - **December 3rd Friday:** Holiday dance with potluck— class graduation dance (end of semester 1 class) 1 ½ hours of class level recreational dancing followed by other club programs
  - **January 3rd Friday:** Winter Dessert Night with one hour of new graduate program dancing and other club programs
  - **February 3rd Friday:** Mardi Gras night—southern food themed potluck dancing with fall class level, and second semester class level dancing
  - **March 3rd Friday:** St. Patrick’s day with corned beef and cabbage provided dancing with fall class level, and second semester class level dancing, and other club programs
  - **April 3rd Friday:** Ice Cream and pie night—also second semester class graduation—dancing at fall class and second semester class level, and other club programs
  - **May 3rd Saturday:** Big dance day: upper program dancing in the morning and afternoon. First and second semester class dancing in the evening to a guest caller

**Other elements of fun and social interaction:**

- Birthday night once a month—recognize birthdays and provide a cake.
- High energy music and singing calls will help dancers incorporate the new call taught at the end of the tip
- “Smart dance cards”—for students who seem to be having difficulty, design their dance cards to have strong, positive (but not pushy) partners, who are particularly selected to work well with them.

## Revitalizing Yourself as a Caller

It's not enough to just motivate and invigorate clubs and dancers. Callers require periodic renewal as well. This means keeping music, choreography, classes, and club nights interesting and varied. The more excited the caller is, the more that positive energy will be communicated to the dancers.

One of the biggest challenges for a caller with weekly club nights is avoiding falling into a rut and trying to not be predictable.<sup>7</sup>

*Music.* You need a dynamic range of music and must avoid using the same music too often. Here are my personal rules of thumb:

1. I call 9 weekly sessions and most of these have 7-8 Tips, so in the average month I call 28-32 tips per session a month.
2. I try not to use the same song twice in a month. Therefore I need 32 patter songs and up to 32 singing calls a month. I keep a data base of which songs I use in which tips each day to help me keep track of songs I have used.
3. Also I try to learn and present seven new pattern songs and seven new singing calls a month, so my repertoire is always evolving.

*Choreography.* Especially if you are using sight calling and/or modules, you need to focus on not having repetitive or predictable choreography. Ideally, at the end of each weekly club night, you will send them away saying *that was new and different*. Please note that *new and different* does not mean *slapped upside the head difficult*.

In any given tip do not use the same get in twice. This is easier at Advanced and above, and very challenging at Basic. It takes thought and planning

Get-In Variation Examples::

- Sequence 1: *Heads Pass the Ocean*
- Sequence 2: *Sides Square Thru*
- Sequence 3: *Heads Lead Right*
- Sequence 4: *Sides Slide Thru*
- Sequence 5: *Heads Flutter Wheel and Sweep ¼*
- Sequence 6: *Heads Box The Gnat and Slide Thru*
- Sequence 7: *Sides Lead Right / Circle To A Line*

<sup>7</sup> Your Editor notes that there is a difference between being a “predictable” caller and a “reliable” caller. Vic Ceder, for example, presents highly varied choreography which surprises and delights the dancers, but he is also highly reliable in getting the dancers home, if in occasionally unpredictable/unexpected ways. Vic is *not* predictable, but he *is* reliable.

- Sequence 8: *Heads Spin The Top*
- Sequence 9: *Heads Pass Thru, Separate Around One*

Likewise, in any given tip, *do not use the same resolve twice*. Again, this is easier at upper programs and can be a real challenge at Basic. For example, never use *Ferris Wheel / Square Thru 3* more than once a tip (or better yet, no more than once a night).

*Singing Call Figures*. Again, you need variation

Choose or write figures that don't always start with *Heads(Sides) Square Thru 4*.

If you are teaching a class, feature a new call in the singing call at the end that it is taught.

If you have an 8-tip night, you need a minimum of 8 singing call figures. Opening, middle and ending breaks need to be varied as well. <sup>8</sup>

1. As the Stephen Sondheim song goes, "*You've gotta have a gimmick*", meaning something new each week. It's your job to make each club night novel, even when you call for the same club 50 times a year. Although early in our careers we put a lot of energy and thought (hopefully) into programming, over time we tend to get into a rut if we do not actively continue to do this.
2. Once you become predictable, you easily become boring, and once you become boring, dancers start to stay home.
3. Reinvent yourself, your music, your programming and your choreography...often.
4. Remember *you are an entertainer* and your dancers must be entertained by your calling.



<sup>8</sup> Editor's Note: If you don't feel up to writing singing call figures just yet, Andy Shore has made a huge collection of singing calls available for download from his website at <http://www.andyshore.com/singers-20100721.pdf>

## Creating Patter Music from Karaoke Tracks

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In trying to figure out how I can attract and keep new dancers, I've been exploring the world of DJ-ing recently. One of the topics high on the list of a club DJ is new music discovery. In square dancing, it seems like we've sometimes become complacent, sometimes club nights feel like "4<sup>th</sup> tip of the evening, of course it's RR 1317 - Fireball". I mean, it's a great song, but as a dancer I want my musical horizons expanded, and, as a caller, keeping a large variety of fresh new music is important to me.

As I play with developing my own calling style, and attracting and keeping different audiences (and keeping myself excited) I'm finding that I want my music to have more variety and a more personal touch than what I can buy from traditional square dance music producers.

- Sometimes the "cheat" versions of the chords don't sound like the original song to my ear.
- Often the song sounds fine, but the percussion line is a little too "on the nose" for my musical tastes; I realize that modern dancers have trouble finding the beat, but as my calling rhythm has gotten better my need for a huge bass "whoomp" has decreased.
- Most of the square dance music labels use the same band and producer, which leads to homogeneity even as the source music comes from completely different genres.

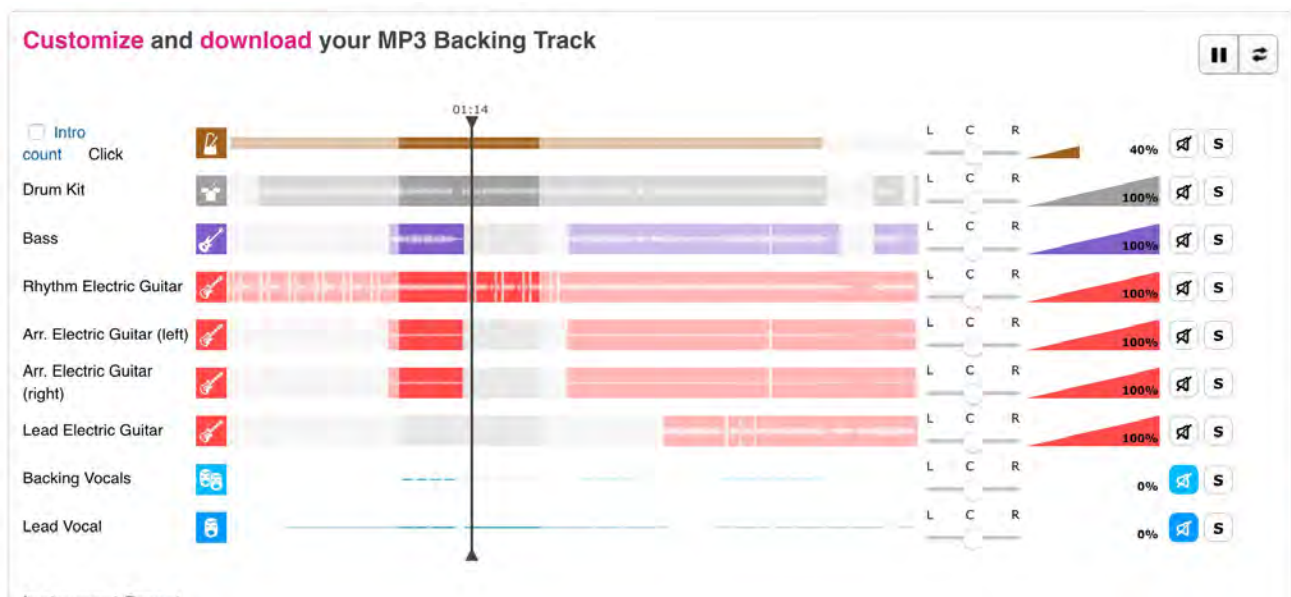
The obvious place to turn is karaoke music. Quality can vary, but some of the production values can be amazingly high. No lyrics to compete with. Of course often music has tempo changes, or large volume shifts, or lacks enough beat to get the dancers moving, or, if you're looking for more than patter music, lacks the right timing structure to be a singing call. I had been trying to fumble through some of these issues with Audacity, but my job got me a Mac, and I realized that the Logic Pro X is only \$200, so I'm now producing enough of my own patter music that dancers are raising eyebrows at me when I'm tired and fall back to more traditional square dance tracks.

So I hear something that would make a good patter track, I'll Shazam it so I have the track name (y'all have Shazam easy to find on your phones, right?). Then I'll go find a karaoke track of it. I buy a lot of material from Karaoke-Version.com, but production values between karaoke producers can vary, so it's worth trying iTunes and Google Play too.

Although one of the advantages of Karaoke-Version.com is that for many tracks they have the option to do a custom mix. A couple things of note here:

- Sometimes adding in 30-40% of the click-track gives enough additional rhythm that you don't have to add a lot in the percussion track.
- That much click-track also gets totally lost in percussion, so if you're having trouble finding the beats, that's a good place to start.
- Listen carefully to the backing vocals, often I can add 20-30% of those in to just get a little more melody without making them audible enough to interfere with my calling.
- The big missing thing here, of course, is some sort of instrumental melody track; you've got the lead vocal (performed by a cover artist), but that'll interfere with your calling. In a lot of modern music the song is basically rhythm and a vocal track, so the techniques I'm about to describe don't help a lot for those sorts of modern pop (we may address some of that in a future article).

Anyway, the custom mix track (this one's for *AC/DC Highway To Hell*) looks something like:



Once I download a track, usually there are a few things I need to fix:

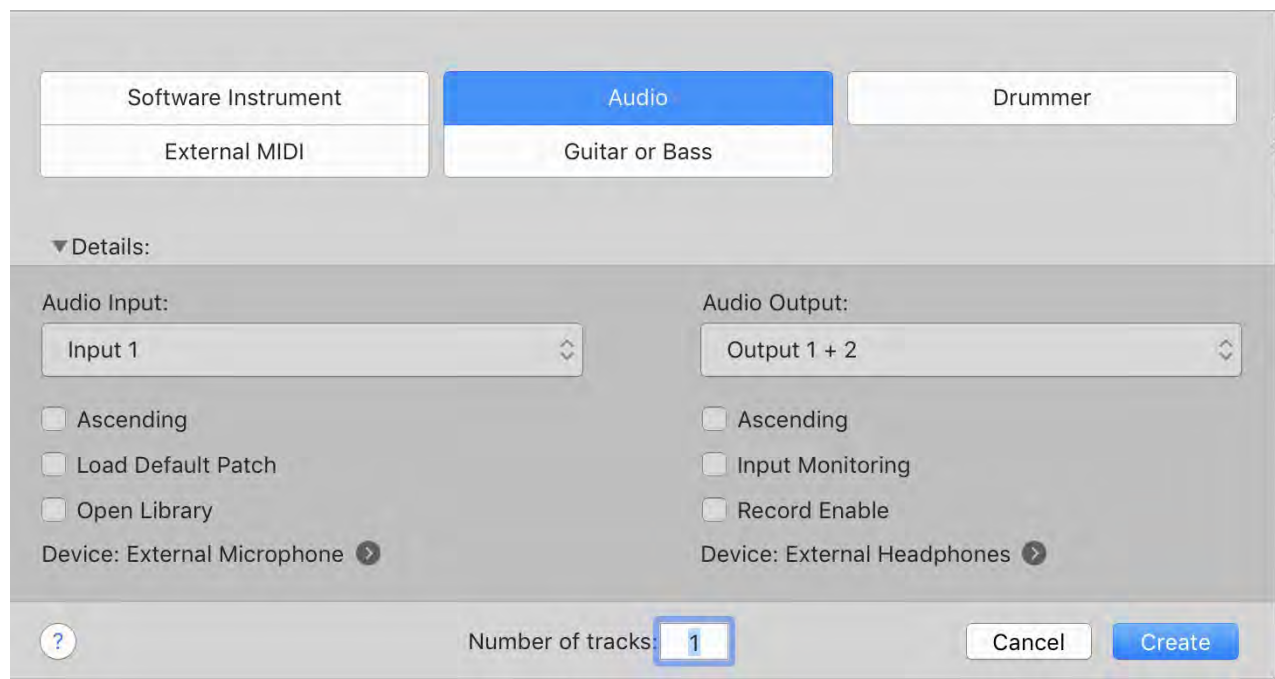
1. Timing isn't consistent across the entire song, so I want to change the entire song to a stable 126BPM.

2. The beat isn't prominent enough, either throughout the whole song, or just in a section of the song, for my dancers to feel it, so I need to add some percussion, or a bass line.
3. Too much of the musical feel is carried in the vocals, and the karaoke track doesn't have a melody line, so I need to add some instrumentals.

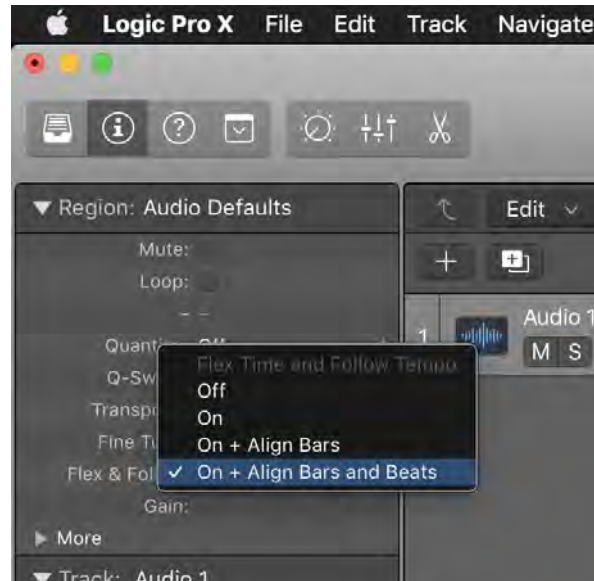
So I'm going to walk through the process I do of taking a karaoke track that's close, but not perfect, and turning it into something I can use for square dance patter.

The particulars of this are with Logic Pro X running on a MacBook Pro. Some of the concepts I've talked about here will work with other DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) software, I expect there'll be some follow-up articles on doing this with other platforms shortly/

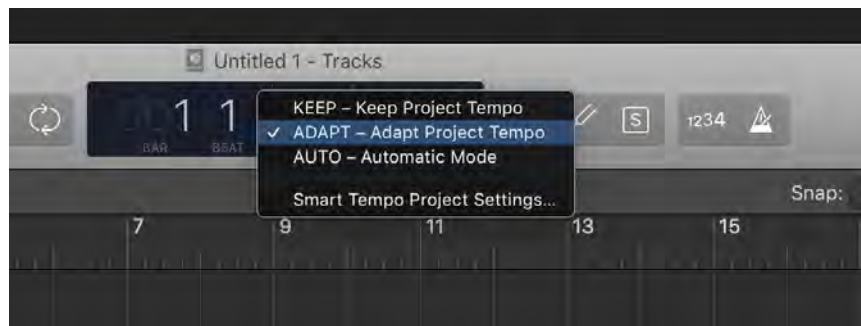
When we create a new project in Logic, it asks for a default track type. The karaoke track comes in as an "Audio" track, so we'll create one of those.



On that track, we set “Flex & Follow” to “On + Align Bars and Beats”. This lets Logic analyze the track for timing information.



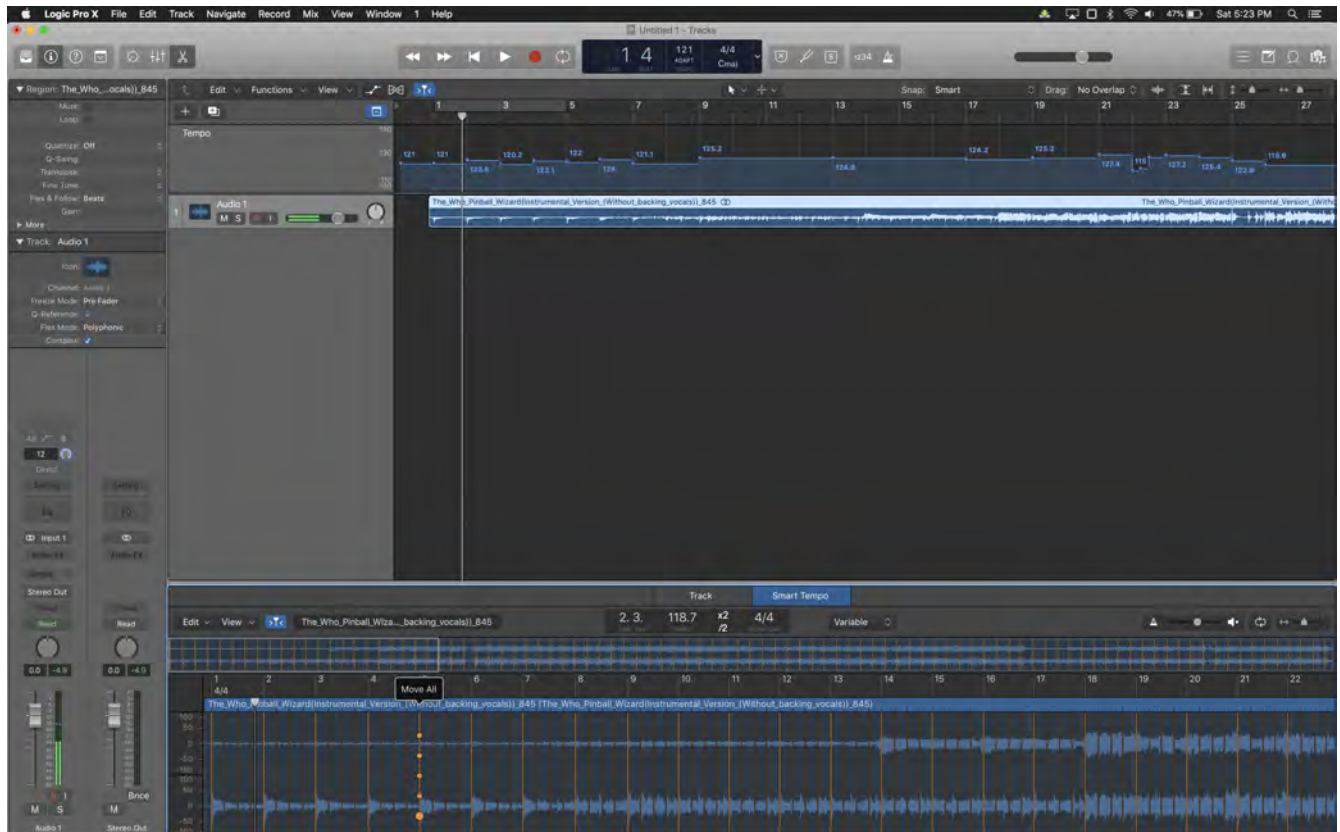
And we set the project to “Adapt” to the track tempo, so that the project as a whole will adapt to the timing information we're going to help Logic attach to the track.



Import the MP3 (or whatever) audio file we want to muck with, after clicking on this I get a dialog box in which I can read in my audio file, in this case I'm going to demonstrate with a karaoke track of *Pinball Wizard* from *The Who*.

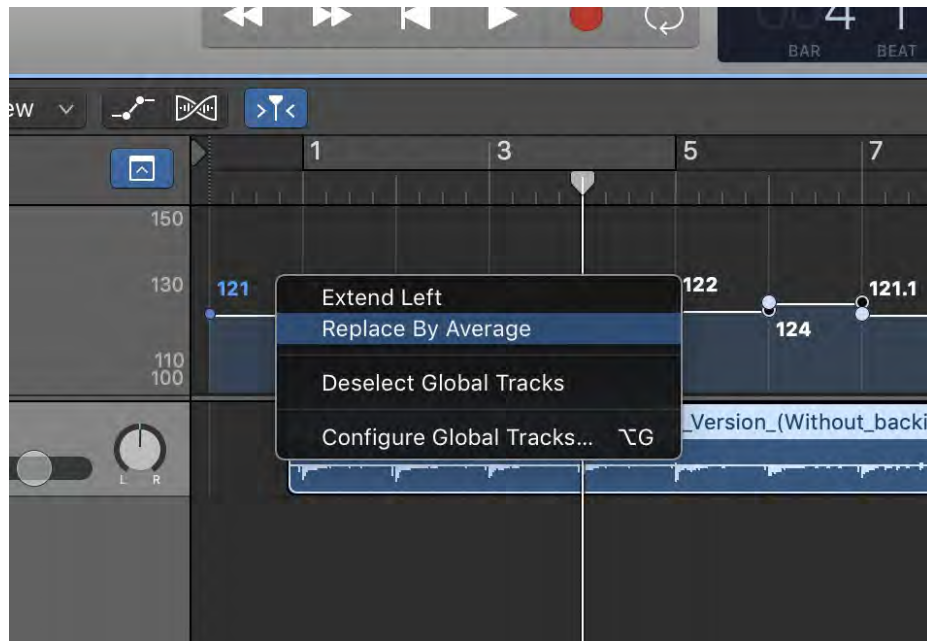


Logic offers us the Smart Tempo editor, and we get a screen that looks something like this:

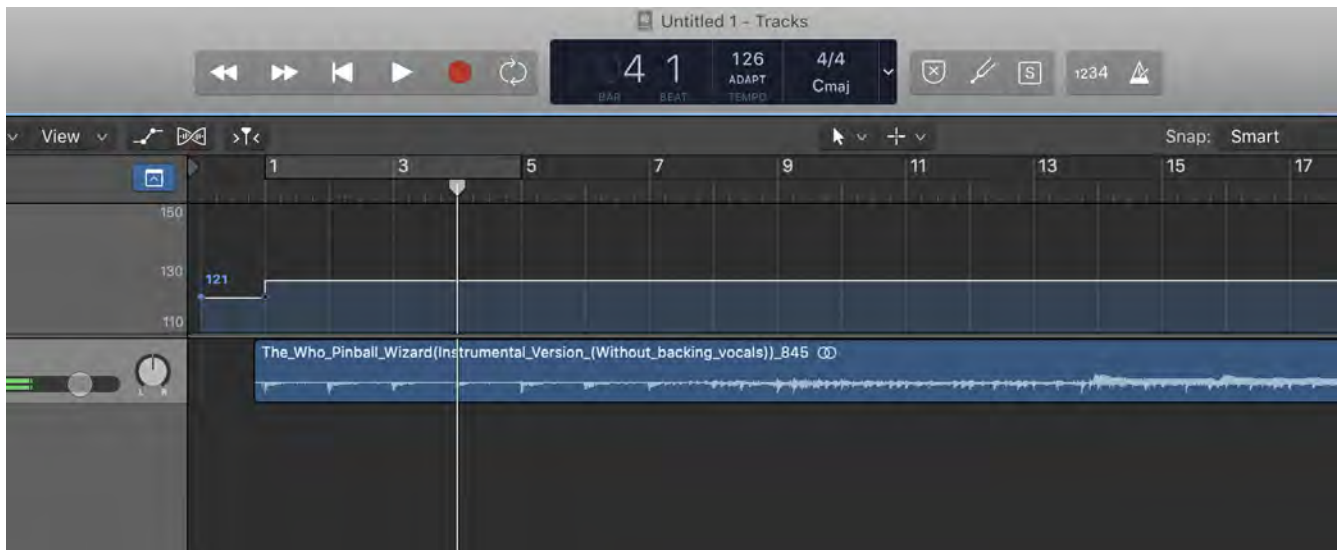


The important thing here is that often the beat analyzer gets the downbeat wrong. I'm hovering over the bottom of those 5 dots in the tempo editor, each of them allows me to either change aspects of the beat selection individually, or for the larger group. A little time spent here makes a huge difference later, especially if you find parts of the song you want to cut out, or repeat.

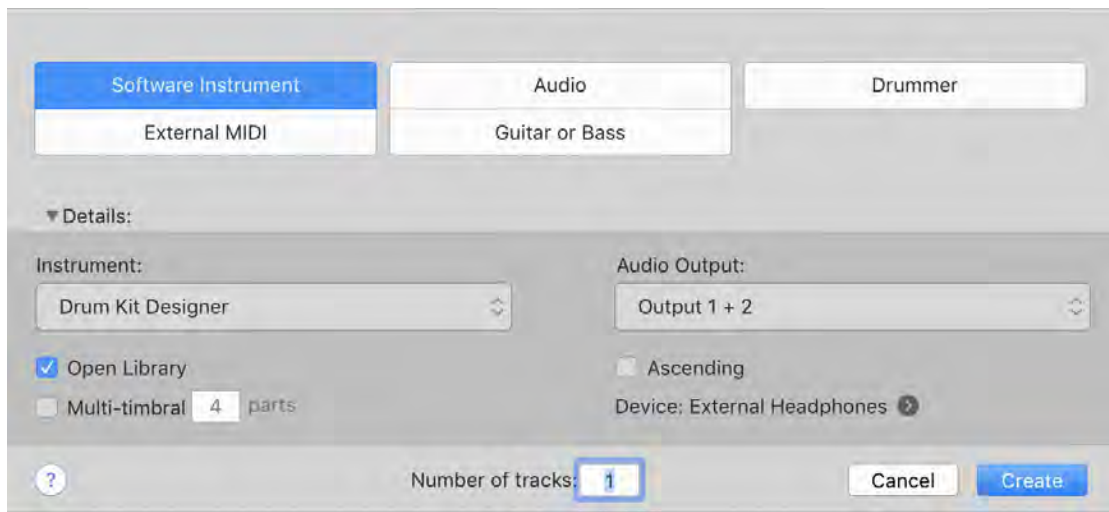
Also, look at that top bar, where we see all the tempo changes for the track. On music recorded without a “click track”, or with real musicians and real instruments, we often see lots of tempo changes. Since we want something with a constant tempo for square dancing, we could individually adjust the dots, but there's a great control-click (right-click) tool: Select everything, and use “Replace By Average”:



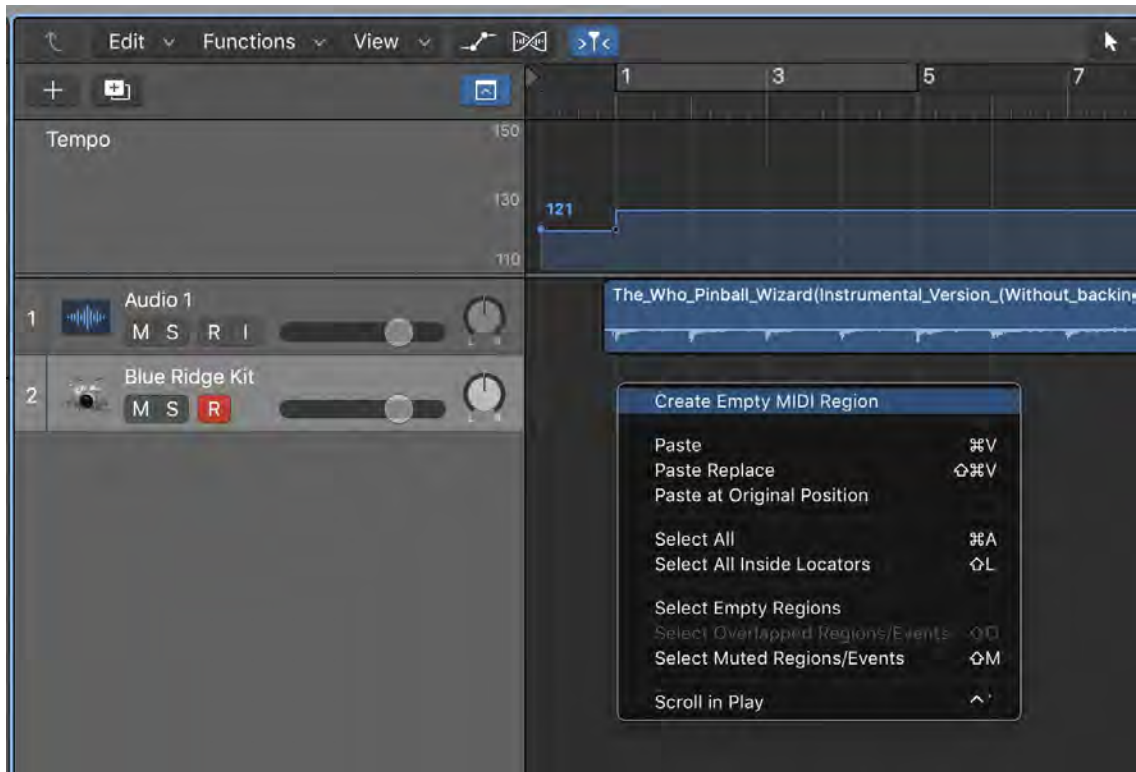
Which gives us a nice clean flat line, that we can drag to 126BPM or thereabouts:



Now if we're going to do a singing call, we want to “bounce” the track in place, which re-renders it so that when we copy and paste portions of the track to other tracks we don't lose all the timing information we just added, but I'm just doing patter music here, so we'll get on to the next stage: Adding some rhythm. In this case we're just going to add a Software Instrument track of a drum kit.



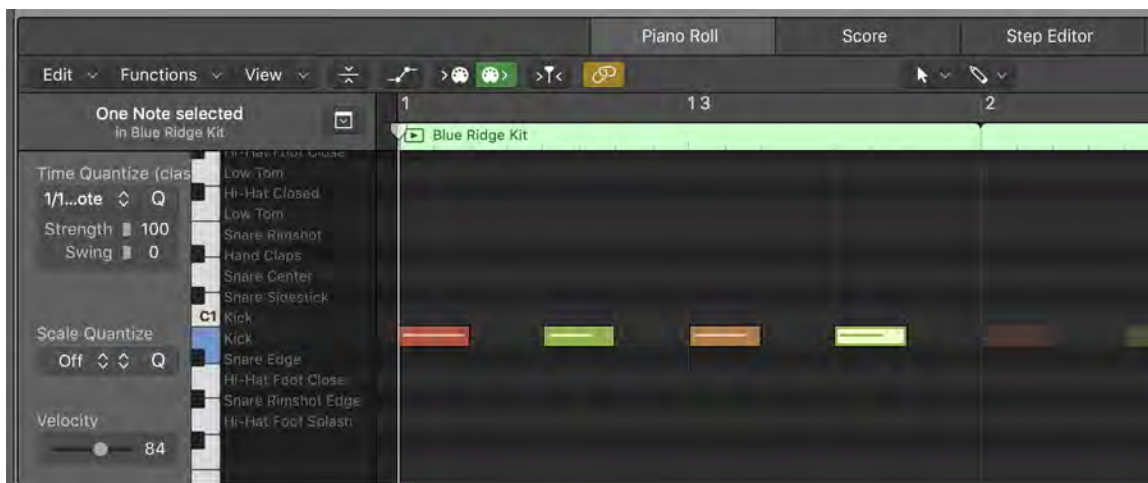
There are a number of slightly different sounding drum kits that come with Logic, the Blue Ridge Kit feels like it'd work for this song. So we get a new track, in which we can “Create Empty MIDI Region”. This gives us a place to create notes. I have a small keyboard, but for a simple bass beat I can command-click in a few notes with the mouse.



If we're feeling lazy, we can drag the upper right side of the new region to create a looping 4 beat region for the entire song. Adding the MIDI region with the loop does some redundant things to the tempo editing track; that's okay, we'll ignore it for now.



Then down in the Piano Roll editor, let's toss in some kick-drum, putting a little more emphasis on the 1 and 3 beats, and boom, we've got a patter track.



These techniques are not without problems. I manage to create some songs that sound fantastic to my ears, that are absolute clunkers when I try to call to them. Many of my dancers are not musically sophisticated, so really need an almost dubstep level beat. With many songs, I realize that what makes me love them is some nostalgic association that my dancers may not have. Without that sense of grooving to the rhythm picked up from—well, the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment exists for a reason and chemical enhancement can really change our memories of a song—let's just say they just don't feel it.

Also, the lack of a melody track means that it's imperative that I work on singing my patter, really putting the melody and more interest into my voice. For my own style, this works, but it isn't for everyone.

However, I recently came home from a long trip, arrived at 2:30 in the morning, hustled off to work at the crack of dawn, after work went to my voice lesson at quarter to six, by quarter after seven I was setting up my sound system to call and realized I hadn't copied that week's music over to my calling laptop. So I sorted by "least recently played", ended up with the perfectly good tracks that I'd bought from traditional square dance music producers, but by the end of the night at least two dancers had said "I can tell it's been a busy week, 'cause your music isn't up to your usual standards."

And why did I choose to do Pinball Wizard when SharpShooter 1044 is a perfectly serviceable treatment of the song for patter? It goes back to my earlier comment about cheater chords: When I was learning to play the guitar, I contorted my fingers into bizarre shapes trying to match Pete Townsend's actual chords. If I don't hear all of that complexity, the song falls flat for me. I'm guessing 99.44% of my dancers couldn't tell the difference, but it just feels "off" to me.

I still buy a hell of a lot of music from traditional square dance music companies, but my favorites are the ones I've taken the time to tweak really make my own, and I'm now looking at various DJing equipment and techniques, because the good DJs are doing this sort of song manipulation on the fly, and changing up their music weekly to try to keep up with the current trends. I suspect that if we, as square dance callers, are going to compete with the club scene, we're going to have to evolve how we treat music.

Some suggestions for songs that have worked well for me using this technique:

- *Basement Jaxx — Do Your Thing*. Note that there are several versions of this available in karaoke tracks, and the one from my favorite karaoke producer is not the best one, it's worth looking around for the good version of this (which has moved around, I first found it on Amazon, last time I saw it it was on iTunes, karaoke track licensing is weird).
- *The Judds — Born To Be Blue*. The intro to this is fantastic for that very laid back slow "bow to your partner, and your corner to....", insert a dramatic pause, and just as the music hits start your circle figure with energy.
- *Earth Wind & Fire — Boogie Wonderland*. 1979 is kind of our target market...
- *Shakira — Try Everything (from Zootopia)*. The intro is a little weird, but I know y'all

have some closet furies in your clubs. And it's modern, which helps keep the 40-some-things engaged.

- *Ottowan — Hands Up (Give Me Your Heart)*. Yeah, it's 1981, but the US remix wasn't released until 1991, so it crosses the late disco era and the late GenX and Millennial demographics.
- *The Judds — Have Mercy*. Not super exciting, but a good teach song.
- *Sweet — Ballroom Blitz*. "Alright fellas, let's gooooooooo!"
- *Paul Simon — Graceland*. For something that we remember as almost easy listening, it moves a floor really nicely, and is mellow enough to be a teach song.
- *Gwen Stefani — The Sweet Escape*. Modern peppy pop, what's not to like?
- *Bobby Darin — Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder*. 'Cause who doesn't love swing?
- *ZZ Top — Sharp Dressed Man*. Yeah, you know exactly which GenX guy (and his long-suffering wife) this one's gonna move.

When picking a song, things that are slightly slow (108-126 BPM) work better than things which are faster and slowed down (130-140 BPM), both because bringing more energy into a song is better than pulling it out, and because the algorithm for changing tempo without changing pitch creates artifacts and stutters in things like drum hits when reducing tempo. You can sometimes cheat this by reducing pitch as well.

A lot of music doesn't do well with the automatic beat detection. Brian Setzer Orchestra, Pink Martini, similar bands that do a lot of interesting things with rhythm, especially with one instrument getting ahead of the beat, and end up with artifacts that really confuse the dancers if the tempo change is too far.

A number of songs that we remember fondly just sound boring when used for square dancing. I had amazing hopes for Golden Earring's *Twilight Zone* and Donna Summer's *I Feel Love*, in both cases I just could not come up with interesting results that moved a floor.



## Women in Calling Mentors

Ett McAtee – [justetthon@gmail.com](mailto:justetthon@gmail.com)

*“Anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you.”*

– Misty Copeland, the first African American female principal dancer with the prestigious American Ballet Theater.

This couldn't be closer to the truth. I was thinking the other day about how people influence and guide us all the time, whether we know it or not. Sometimes their help and guidance is actively sought out, and sometimes we absorb their expertise, advice, and gentle mentoring over time to make us the callers we are today.

Do you have a mentor and muse? Are you aware of how this person (or these persons) helped you get started in calling, to have the confidence to go on?

Often, women callers face a plethora of issues that male callers just do not have to deal with.

One of those is the pitch and range that square dance singing calls are produced in, and until recently, we had to change the music a tad in order to hit the notes. Thanks to Shauna Kaaria and a few other music producers today, we have tunes that are cut in the “female key” that are much more accessible to all of us as women callers. Another issue is working in what was almost an exclusive “old boys club” where breaking in as women callers was, and sometimes still is, difficult for a variety of reasons.

But, aside from that, *who are your mentor and muse?*

I asked The Women In Calling group to provide some feedback on who they consider their mentors and muses.

Before I share those stories, perhaps we should define what a mentor is. At its core, being a mentor means that you are a trusted advisor who makes yourself available to offer support, gives constructive criticism and feedback when appropriate, and is not over-bearing, all being done in a way that makes that makes sense, is not self-serving, and keeps that person's best interest at heart.

A muse is someone or a personified force who is the source of inspiration for a creative artist. Certainly, square dance callers are creative artists at heart as they construct choreography for their dancers, develop interesting singing calls, perform “theme night dances,” do “first nighter” party nights for non-square dancers, and organize square dance events both large and small.

I ask again: *Who is your mentor and muse?*

Simply put, I think none of us would be where we are today without the mentors and muses who helped us get here. Here are some stories from the Women In Calling. They have agreed to share their stories with you. I hope you, too, reflect on who you consider your mentor and muse. These are their stories.

As Deborah Carroll-Jones says, “our mentors never get truly ‘paid back,’ and having an article naming those who opened this incredible door of experiences for us is far overdue.”

Here are the Women In Calling stories.

### **Terri Sherrer**

Deborah Carroll-Jones inspired me to be a better caller. Anne Uebelacker gave me my first chance to call to a group at Shoreline Squares fly-in, and Kris Jensen invited me to call at the Women’s Tip in Phoenix [at the convention]. There were also some guys who helped me along the way. John Paul Bresden paved the way for me to become a member of the Birmingham Callers Association. At the time I started, we didn't have any gay callers in our area and I danced with a gay club. I wanted to provide our club with a choice. I was also interested in the mechanics of calling and thought it would be fun to learn. Later I learned how much I really enjoyed teaching dancers how to become better dancers.

### **Patricia Kelm**

We started dancing in 1972, but after just a year or so, I was singing along with all of his singing calls. I knew what he was going to call next. He encouraged me, and I called some guest tips at our club. Other members encouraged me. A year later, we attended a caller school, and so it began.

### **Connie Graham**

I was doing a party dance which I thought was line dancing, which I did all the time. Found out it was square dance, so taught myself a singing call and already knew how to dance as we love to square dance and usually dance 4 nights a week. After the party--which was a total success!--my husband said that he thought that I should seriously consider taking up calling.

We talked to a caller friend and he listened to me and agreed and has helped me a ton. Everyone has been so great to help me. I was 66 when I started! Never too late to try something new! I may never catch up with everyone on the choreo, but I love what we do and we need callers in our area so badly! I am hoping to inspire other women that it is never too late to fol-

low your dreams! Love, love, love it!

My mentor and the one who lets me call and never turns me away is Chris Wildhagen. He has backed me 100% from day 1. The women in this group have also been great! Shauna has been great as has Deborah!

### **Shauna Forbush Kaaria:**

I started clogging and teaching clogging in my late teens. That continued (on and off) for the next 20 years. I took a square dance class my senior year in high school, but never danced after graduation. Too much else going on in my life. I was teaching clogging classes and performing with the Grandland Singers (a local singing/dancing group), along with trying discover who I was and what I wanted to be when I grew up.

Mid 90's my clogging paths started crossing with square dance paths at local festivals and such. My (then) husband and I learned to square dance in the garage of neighbors who happened to be a caller/clogging instructor team. (David and Dawn Mee). I found myself spending more time in the square dance halls than the clogging halls, and realized I had been hooked by square dancing.

In 1999, I married Vic Kaaria and it wasn't long before I had let go of the clogging classes and started cuing rounds. The timing translated easily from being a clogging cuer.

In 2007, Vic was teaching a caller school with another local caller. Since I was going to be there anyway, I figured why not take the class? The first night of class, everyone was asked to do a singing call they had prepared. I refused. I hadn't prepared (didn't get wind of the assignment) and no way was I singing alone in front of other people. *All* of my singing experience had been in choral groups, singing harmony.

My first time on the microphone at class was to call the "Chicken Plucker" to a square of dancers. The words were written where they could be plainly seen. I had watched the other students and recognized their "mistakes," mostly with the timing. I made up my mind that I wouldn't make those same errors.

I picked up the microphone (as I had done for the past 30 years while teaching clogging/rounds), looked at that single square of *friends*, and I was terrified. That shocked me. I broke the tension by saying "apart, point," got a laugh from my audience, and then I was okay. My timing wasn't perfection, but I was happy with my performance. I did do a singing call at our graduation dance, but only because Vic agreed to sing with me.

The rest is history. I was hooked. I was blessed to live with my mentor/teaching, who just happens to be one of the best teachers around. Deborah would support that statement. I still

have a lot to learn, and I love it.

I guess the bottom line of it all is...I never chose to become a caller. It just sort of happened, and I'm so very happy it did!

### **Nikki Radford Hensley**

Keith Ferguson, the caller for Bows and Beaus then. He is semi retired now.

### **Susan Morris**

There are several callers who helped me in the beginning. Hank Johnson volunteered to mentor me. Hank Orth and Wayne Easton gave me the opportunity to call guest tips. But Jerry Junck, with a few words on the last day of my first full callers school, showed me the possibilities. Since then I've been listening to and learning from too many callers to name.

### **Wendy Brooks**

Started dancing when I was 16. Loved it. My partner--whom I eventually married--and I danced until our kids (FYI, danced on the night before I gave birth to twins! Who were only 2 days early. Wonder why my corner did not want to swing me?) were old enough to be so involved that we just didn't have time.

After we moved, there was a party dance at our church and we remember how much we loved it, so we came back about 20 years ago. A few years in, my husband got a few records and tried calling. Love him dearly and he had a nice time, but let's just say staying on-key was not his strong point. As I tried to help him, I realized I was having a blast!

Finally, I got up the nerve to ask my caller if I could try a singing call at the club one night. Had to start that record 3 times, but once I get going, I nailed it pretty well. I knew the singing calls would come fairly easy. I knew my husband the draftsman would have been better at patter, but did I also mention he really hated mics and performing?!

I worked on patter, still not my main strength, and teaching. Attended Silver State Callers School with Doug Davis, Nasser Shukayr, and Wade Driver. Let's just say that all of these people have helped over the years.

At home our club caller Wayne Crawford helped to give me opportunities here and there. Started calling party dances. I've always been a natural teacher and wondered how I would do teaching squares. Asked our club, which was not doing classes, if I could teach a class in the back half of the hall for an hour before and first hour of club (there was a divider). They approved and I had enough for a square. Loved teaching and was told I turned out some very

good dancers. Finally bit the bullet and started a family/teen club. The rest is history... Started another home school club that ran for several years until the HS group broke up. But still have my Funky Squares club that faces every Friday and looking at starting another one in the next county. That's it for me.

### **Anne Uebelacker**

I had danced for a year and really wanted to know how the caller could get us to move to the music and then in a couple of calls get us back to our corner. I asked my local caller if he would teach me how to do it. He laughed at me and said no, women can't be callers because of their high voices.

The gauntlet was thrown down and I never looked back. A wonderful couple of challenge dancers took me under their wing and helped me to believe that yes, women can be callers. They taught me how to move checkers and how important it was to learn definitions.

My Mum and Dad were my biggest supporters and my number one fans.

Thanks to everyone who believed in me!

### **Jane Clewe**

About 10 years ago, I was angeling an Advanced class. The third week in a row that the caller cancelled at the last minute, I said, "I'm not sending these dancers home *again!*", and I just got up on the stage and started calling/teaching!

No microphone, no music, no preparation at all. However, I'd been doing choreography in my head before, like when swimming or some activity like that.

As I remember, I ended up teaching that class for three weeks. I was generally able to keep the floor moving, by thinking of something to call from that formation, but totally unable to resolve anything. A few dancers stopped coming, but others gave me positive feedback and encouragement, saying things like "Oh, *now* I understand that call. The way you explain it makes sense to me."

I signed up for the next GCA caller school, and I'm still calling ten years later.

### **Misha Case**

We were at a parade and there wasn't a caller available, so I was calling out the moves, decided that I liked it and decided that I was going to pursue it.

A new caller seminar came up a month later, I crashed and burned hard, picked myself up,

dusted myself off, and continued on.

In the next few months I scheduled time to work on my calling and I improved. I love it, and I wish that I started sooner. I will have to say that I was dancing for 18 years before ever picking up the mic.

### **Ett McAtee**

My early mentor was Mike Jacobs, as he lived close by and I attended his clubs and watched him call. He provided many useful tips and watched over me as I called WITH him at various fly-ins and conventions.

Another early influence was (and still is) Anne Uebelacker, as she helped me get through my very first caller school in NYC. It was the inaugural Gay Caller School, in fact.

I think my muse is probably Ben Rubright, as he really defined for us all the meaning of flow in the dance, and of square breathing that made a huge difference for me as I learned to call.



**6 Couple Dancing**

**Don Beck** – [donbeck@donbeck.org](mailto:donbeck@donbeck.org)



I have always chosen to do Six Couple dancing from Facing Lines instead of a Rectangular Set. I guess it is a personal preference, but for me, it's easier to set up and easier to use Modules or Mental Image. I'm sure these same principles can be used with the four head couples and two side couples starting setup that many use.

Here's how I typically set up the sets. I have dancers square up normally, with three squares across. Then I have Sides Lead Right and Circle to a Line. Next I have the center square divide in half, sliding two couples to the left and two to the right, to join the other squares. I then tell them that this is home, etc.

If I only have six couples, I have one square Square Up. Then have the Sides Lead Right and Circle to a Line. Next have the other two couples, who were about to go home because they couldn't dance the last tip, join the two lines, one couple on the end of each line.

The beauty of this is that if you are lucky enough to have, say seven squares, you can have two rows of three divide into two sets of six each, as described above, and have the left over square just make regular lines. All of the choreography described in the handout works equally well for four couples as it does for six. Further, if you have two squares left over, they can each dance as four couple lines or they (or you) can choose to have them dance as eight couple lines. It will still all work, except for the timing of the final promenade home.

Remember, this is a gimmick, so a little goes a long way. Even very simple choreography feels excitingly different to the dancers. This also works, with the right calls, at Advanced and Challenge. Good luck. Have fun. And most of all, let your dancers have fun.

The following method is a summary of how to use zeros and equivalents (module calling) to create six couple choreography. A more versatile approach to this gimmick is to use mental image choreography. See chapter 52 of my book *Out of Sight*<sup>9</sup> for complete information on the mental image approach.

<sup>9</sup> [http://summersweet.org/SquareDancing/Out\\_Of\\_Sight.html](http://summersweet.org/SquareDancing/Out_Of_Sight.html)

1. Set up the "square" in 1P2P3P lines (or zero lines) per figure 1, below:

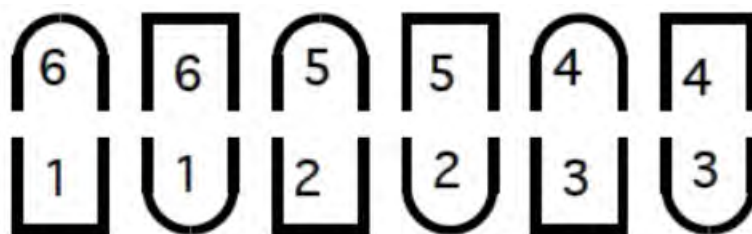


Figure 1: 1P2P3P or Zero Lines

2. Explain that *this is home*; all other things are normal except that Right and Left Grand RLG) goes 6 people to original partner instead of 4. (Leave out RLG and just promenade most of the time.)

3. Option 1: Get out to an Allemande Left or Right and Left Grand:

**Table 1: 1P2P3P Get-Outs**

- a. Star Thru / Square Thru 3 / Allemande Left
- b. Right & Left Thru / Slide Thru / Pass Thru / Allemande Left
- c. Allemande Left
- d. Left Square Thru / Allemande Left
- e. Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$  / Boys Run / Allemande Left
- f. Star Thru / California Twirl / Allemande Left
- g. Pass the Ocean / Girls Trade / Swing Through / RLG
- h. Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$  / Girls Run / RLG
- i. RLG

These get-outs will also work from normal, four couple 1P2P lines.

Most other 1P2P get-outs will also work from 1P2P3P lines.

4. Option 2: Convert 1P2P3P to an "8 chain 1" (RB) setup

This is performed using a conversion module from Table 2 below, and then calling a get-out to an AL or RLG per Table 3.

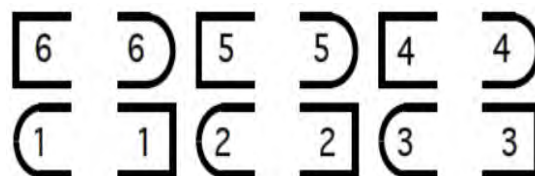


Figure 2: "8 Chain 1" setup (RB)

**Table 2 :1P2P3P to "8 Chain 1""8 Chain 1" setup (RB)**

- a. *Right & Left Thru / Star Thru*
- b. *Star Thru / Right & Left Thru*
- c. *Pass The Ocean / Girls Trade / Recycle*
- d. *Spin The Top / Boys Run / Wheel And Deal.*

**Table 3: "8 Chain 1" Get-Outs**

- a. *8 Chain 1 / AL*
- b. *8 chain 7 / AL* (maybe these should be called "12 Chain 1" or "12 Chain 7"?)
- c. *Pass Thru / AL*
- d. *Right & Left Thru / Square Thru 3 / AL*
- e. *Swing Thru / Boys Trade / Turn Thru / AL*
- f. *Box The Gnat / RLG*
- g. *Swing Thru / Boys Trade / RLG*
- h. *Swing Thru / Boy Run / Tag The Line Right / Wheel & Deal / RLG*
- i. *Dosado to an Ocean Wave / Scoot Back / RLG*
- j. *Dosado to an Ocean Wave / Boys Run / Promenade Home*
- k. *... Or convert back To 1P2P3P with a Star Thru.*
- l. *Touch 1/4 & Roll / RLG*
- m. *Star Thru & Roll / RLG*

**5. Option 3: Convert 1P2P3P to a Zero Box**

Convert to a Box 1-4 type of setup, as shown in Figure 3, by using a conversion module from table 4, below.

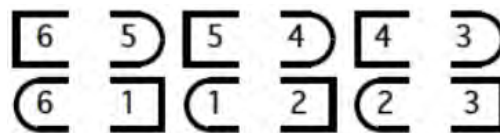


Figure 3: Zero Box or Box 1-4

**Table 4: 1P2P3P to Zero Box**

- a. *Touch ¼ / Single File Circulate / Boys Run*
- b. *Flutter Wheel / Touch ¼ / Coordinate / Wheel And Deal*
- c. *Right & Left Thru / Pass the Ocean / Spin Chain Thru / Scoot Back*  
(This Is A Zero Box Plus Step To A Wave.)

**6. Option 3A: Get out to an AL per table 5 -or- go to option 3B.**

Get out to an Allemande Left per Table 5, below, or keep them moving with Option 3B.

**Table 5: Zero Box Get-Outs**

- a. Allemande Left*
- b. Right & Left Thru / Pass to the Center / Square Thru 3 / Allemande Left*
- c. Star Thru / Square Thru 3 / Allemande Left*

**7. Option 3B: Convert zero box to 1P2P3P and continue.**

Using the conversion modules from Table 6, and convert the dancers to a 1P2P3P box **and continue from there.**

**Table 6: Zero Box to 1P2P3P**

- a. Spin Chain Thru, Ends Circulate Double, Centers Run, Bend The Line.*
- b. Flutter Wheel, Sweep 1/4, Touch 1/4, Coordinate, Wheel And Deal & Sweep 1/4.*
- c. Swing Thru, Women Circulate, Men Trade, Men Run, Bend The Line.*

**8. Zeroes (Two Couple)**

Insert any zeros that you currently use, when you want, assuming they have two couples working with each other and not with the entire square. Some examples follow.

OK: *Swing Thru / Centers Run / Wheel & Deal*

No Good: *Eight Chain Four -or- All 8 Circulate Double*

## 9. Zeroes (Entire Square)

Insert zeros that affect the entire square if they are "technical zeros" (Most "true zeros" need some modification.) See table 7 for applicable zeros (including some usable true zeros.).

**Table 7: Zeros**

- a. *Right & Left Thru / Pass To The Center (Use This In Place Of Dive Thru) / Pass Thru / Right & Left Thru / Pass To The Center / Pass Thru.*  
(This is basically a 6-couple version of the "Chicken Plucker" routine.)
- b. *Right & Left Thru / Veer To The Left / Ferris Wheel / Pass Thru.*
- c. (From Waves Or 2-Faced Lines): *Centers Trade / All Circulate / Centers Trade.*
- d. *Eight Chain 6 (Or, "Twelve Chain 6")*
- e. *Spin Chain Thru / Girls Circulate / Scoot Back.*
- f. *Spin Chain The Gears.*

The following works from zero lines (1P2P3P):

- g. *Touch ¼ / Coordinate / Ferris Wheel / Step To A Wave / Ping Pong Circulate / Center Girls Trade / Extend / Recycle & Sweep 1/4.*

The following sequences may be used as equivalents to "Pass To The Center, Pass Thru" in the "Chicken Plucker" routine:

- h. *Pass Thru / Trade By.*
- i. *Step To A Wave / All Circulate.*
- j. *Eight (Or 12) Chain Thru*
- k. *Veer To The Left / Ferris Wheel, / Square Thru 3/4.*
- l. *Veer To The Left / Couples Circulate / Wheel And Deal / Right & Left Thru.*

## Summary

Most of the sequences in Tables 1 through 7 are very basic, and are typical of what you're hopefully now using in normal four-couple dancing. They were chosen to show that little additional effort needs to be invested to enjoy six-couple choreography.

No attempt has been made to drift from the normal feel of four-couple choreography with such sequences as "*Lines Of 6 Pass Thru / 3x3 Wheel And Deal / Double Pass Thru / First 3 Left, Next 3 Right*" = Zero.

There is plenty of entertainment available from this gimmick without going that far.

Remember, enjoy it, but don't overdo it!



**Stirring the Bucket**

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Stirring the bucket was too often a way of covering up a mistake or an error by either the dancers or the caller but in fact, it was actually a very usable mixing tool and had a very specific purpose in traditional square dancing.

**Stirring the bucket – a look back in history.**

Why do we stir the bucket? *Well*, says one conversation, *it's part of the tradition*. This is in part correct.

It *is* tradition, but also prior to 1950(ish), the bucket stir was a practical tool, and served as an acknowledgment tool between callers and dancers.

In the early 1950s the bucket stir began to die out because it was no longer necessary with the advent of standardization of calls and sequences and the development of Modern Western Square Dancing.

Prior to that, traditional square dance differed greatly from region to region but there were generally specific characteristics and movements that were fixed routines that distinguished it from the more free-flowing sequences that we're presently used to in Modern Western Square Dancing.

In short, traditional square dance was based generally on:

- 1. A limited number of basic movements, or "calls."** This allowed new people and visitors to the town (where the dance was held) to join the group with experienced dancers to learn by doing and observing and "assimilating" the sequence rather than by taking a series of lessons.
- 2. New dancers were usually started in position facing the caller.** This allowed for best hearing and watching as well as the ability to be guided and observe the remainder of the square.
- 3. Dance sequences were called in a specific and fixed order** and repeated, rather than improvised by the prompter or caller.
- 4. Callers usually began a sequence with couple-specific choreography.** This was done to demonstrate to the other couples what the caller wanted them to do shortly.

This could be something like *Couple Number One, Bow And Swing*. In this situation, Couple Number Three (the new dancers) had a chance to observe what would be expected of them. *Couple Number One Lead To The Right / Circle Half / Dip And Dive* or something similar...and once again, Couple Number Three got to observe. Eventually by the time it got to Couple Number Three, they'd had two chances to observe how the sequence ran completely, then been involved once in the sequence, and then got to lead the sequence. (In other words, watch, participate, lead)

*The bucket was stirred after the opening few dances to rotate new dancers from the watch position, to the participate position and then to the starting lead position.*

Although the routines varied slightly, the movements generally did not. This also allowed for the entry of new dancers any time into the square.

Remember, from the mid to late 1800s to about 1940-1950 there was no set program for square dancing such as we enjoy today. Each region had their own few local dance moves (their version of the movement). A *Dosado* in one area vs *Dosado* in another (which is the reason we have *Dopaso*) is a good example. Traveling callers occasionally brought in new moves, but the method was always the same. *Get everyone dancing and having fun.*

The lack of standardized calls didn't present a problems to the dancers, (either experienced or new) because the visiting caller would walk them through any new calls or routines before putting it to music, or would simply call what was locally familiar. Within this context, the bucket stir was simply a way of rotating the dancers from newbie to lead positions.

Often there were two sequences called for the dance. This was because it was tiring for the band and after about 10 minutes of hard playing (2 full sets in order) the band needed a break for about 5 minutes, and the caller needed a drink.

These days, stirring the bucket really serves no practical purpose as it's easy to change figures and sequences in Modern Western Square Dancing. *Heads Face Grand Square*, vs. *Sides Face Grand Square* is a great example.

Nevertheless, stirring the bucket is still done in many areas, mainly due to the root traditions, and for a periodic novelty to the dancers.

A bucket stir is not designed to change partners in a square but only rotate the dancers left (clockwise) one position. Today it can be called to stir either right or left, but still should not separate chosen partners. Some simple bucket stirring routines follow.

*Heads Square Thru 4*  
*Swing Thru*  
*Boys Run*  
*Bend The Line*  
*Right & Left Thru*  
*Pass Thru*  
*Wheel & Deal*  
*Zoom*  
*Centers Star Thru, and back away...your bucket*  
*has been stirred!*

*Heads Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$*   
*Walk And Dodge*  
*Pass Thru*  
*Centers Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$*   
*Walk & Dodge*  
*Partner Trade*

*Heads Swing Thru*  
*Turn Thru*  
*Same 4 Cloverleaf*  
*Sides Swing Thru*  
*Same Boy Run*  
*Bend The Line, and back away...*

*Heads Lead To The Right*  
*Dive Thru*  
*Centers Veer Right*  
*Bend The Line, and back away....*

*Heads Pass The Ocean*  
*Recycle*  
*Zoom*  
*Sides Pass The Ocean*  
*Recycle, and back away...*

*Heads Lead Right*  
*Dive Thru*  
*Centers Circle  $\frac{3}{4}$ , and back away...*

*Heads Lead Right*  
*Dive Thru*  
*Centers Circle  $\frac{3}{4}$ , and back away...*

*Heads Circle Left  $\frac{3}{4}$*   
*Zoom*  
*Centers Circle Left  $\frac{3}{4}$ , and back away...*

*Four Ladies Chain*  
*Heads Right & Left Thru*  
*Pass Thru*  
*Sides California Twirl*  
*Everybody (carefully!) Cloverleaf*



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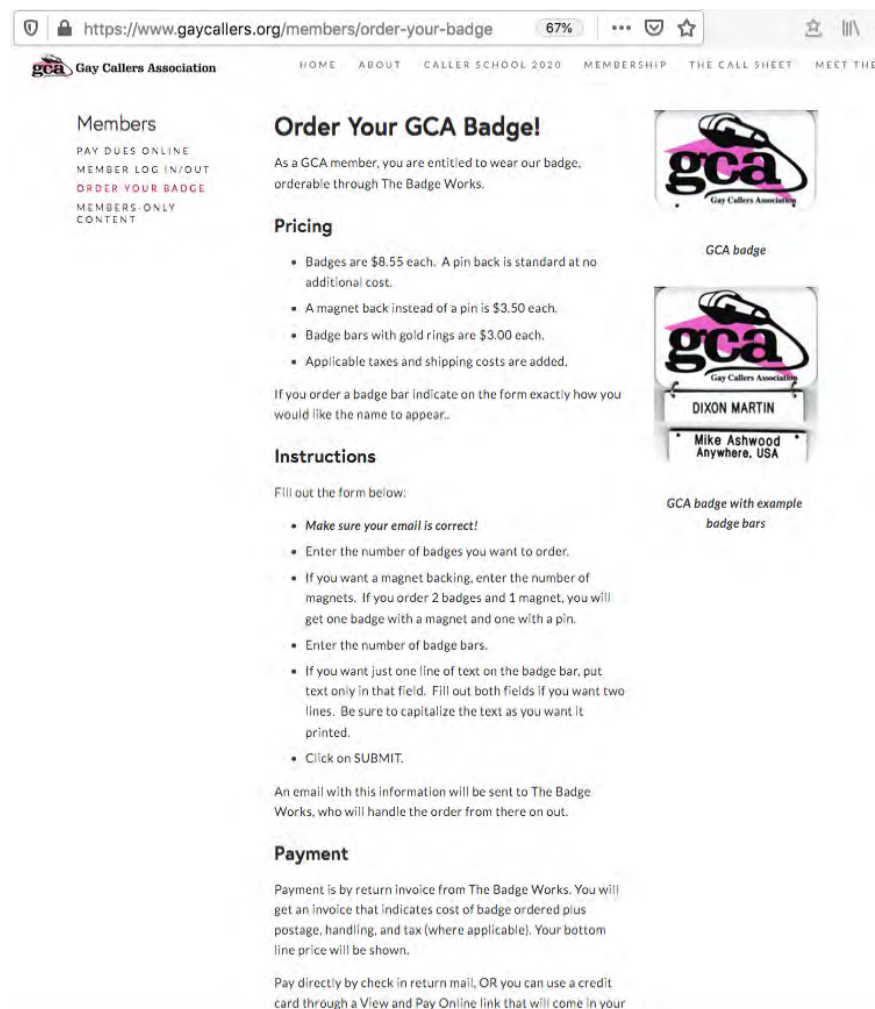
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The Board thanks Michael Wills for setting this up for us!



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GCA badge with example badge bars

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## Bonus Photo: Ryo Sasaki

Courtesy of Ross Lopton-Crawshaw, here's a bonus photo of **Allan Hurst, Ryo Sasaki, Rick Hawes, and Ross** at *Puddletown Grand Mix*, the 2019 West Coast LGBTQ+ Advanced & Challenge fly-in, which was held in Seattle this year.

Ryo's calling was the hit of the Advanced Hall, with much laughing, oohing, and aahing at not just the wonderful choreography, but also Ryo's wry and comedic delivery...especially when one or two dancers may have gotten something just a bit wrong!



**Thans for reading!**

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